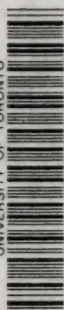



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THE
HISTORY
OF
England,

FROM
THE INVASION OF JULIUS CÆSAR
TO
THE REVOLUTION IN 1688.

EMBELLISHED WITH

Engravings on Copper and Wood,
FROM ORIGINAL DESIGNS.

By DAVID HUME, *Esq.*

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. WALLIS, 46, PATERNOSTER-ROW,
T. DAVISON, WHITEFRIERS.

1803.

HISTORY

England

THE INVASION OF JULIUS CAESAR

THE REVOLUTION OF 1688

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VOLUME II. 2

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. WALLIS, 40, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1803

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.



The concession of the Great Charter, or rather its full establishment (for there was a considerable interval of time between the one and the other), gave rise, by degrees, to a new species of government, and introduced some order and justice into the administration. APP. II.

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They followed him to St. Benedict's church, whither he went to hear vespers, attacked him before the altar, and having cloven his head with many blows, retired without meeting any opposition.

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STATE OF EUROPE. 1154.

THE extensive confederacies, by which the European potentates are now at once united and set in opposition to each other, and which, though they are apt to diffuse the least spark of dissension throughout the whole, are at least attended with this advantage, that they prevent any violent revolutions or conquests in particular states, were totally unknown in ancient ages ; and the theory of foreign politics in each kingdom formed a speculation much less complicated and involved than at present. Commerce had not yet bound toge-

ther the most distant nations in so close a chain : wars, finished in one campaign, and often in one battle, were little affected by the movements of remote states : the imperfect communication among the kingdoms, and their ignorance of each other's situation, made it impracticable for a great number of them to combine in one project or effort : and above all, the turbulent spirit and independent situation of the barons or great vassals in each state gave so much occupation to the sovereign, that he was obliged to confine his attention chiefly to his own state, and his own system of government, and was more indifferent about what passed among his neighbours. Religion alone, not politics, carried abroad the views of princes ; while it either fixed their thoughts on the Holy Land, whose conquest and defence was deemed a point of common honour and interest, or engaged them in intrigues with the Roman pontiff, to whom they had yielded the direction of ecclesiastical affairs, and who was every day assuming more authority than they were willing to allow him.

Before the conquest of England by the duke of Normandy, this island was as much separated from the rest of the world in politics as in situation ; and except from the inroads of the Danish pirates, the English, happily confined at home, had neither enemies nor allies on the continent. The foreign dominions of William connected them with the king and great vassals of France ; and while the

opposite pretensions of the pope and emperor in Italy produced a continual intercourse between Germany and that country, the two great monarchs of France and England formed, in another part of Europe, a separate system, and carried on their wars and negotiations, without meeting either with opposition or support from the others.

STATE OF FRANCE.

ON the decline of the Carlovingian race, the nobles in every province of France, taking advantage of the weakness of the sovereign, and obliged to provide, each for his own defence, against the ravages of the Norman freebooters, had assumed, both in civil and military affairs, an authority almost independent, and had reduced within very narrow limits the prerogative of their princes. The accession of Hugh Capet, by annexing a great fief to the crown, had brought some addition to the royal dignity; but this fief, though considerable for a subject, appeared a narrow basis of power for a prince who was placed at the head of so great a community. The royal demesnes consisted only of Paris, Orleans, Estampes, Compiègne, and a few places scattered over the northern provinces: in the rest of the kingdom, the prince's authority was rather nominal than real: the vassals were accustomed, nay entitled, to make war without his permission, on each other: they were even entitled, if they conceived themselves injured, to turn their arms against their sovereign: they exercised all

civil jurisdiction, without appeal, over their tenants and inferior vassals : their common jealousy of the crown easily united them against any attempt on their exorbitant privileges ; and as some of them had attained the power and authority of great princes, even the smallest baron was sure of immediate and effectual protection. Besides six ecclesiastical peerages, which, with the other immunities of the church, cramped extremely the general execution of justice ; there were six lay peerages, Burgundy, Normandy, Guienne, Flanders, Toulouse, and Champagne, which formed very extensive and puissant sovereignties. And though the combination of all those princes and barons could, on urgent occasions, muster a mighty power, yet was it very difficult to set that great machine in movement ; it was almost impossible to preserve harmony in its parts ; a sense of common interest alone could, for a time, unite them under their sovereign against a common enemy ; but if the king attempted to turn the force of the community against any mutinous vassal, the same sense of common interest made the others oppose themselves to the success of his pretensions. Lewis the Gross, the last sovereign, marched at one time to his frontiers against the Germans at the head of an army of two hundred thousand men ; but a petty lord of Corbeil, of Puiset, of Couci, was able, at another period, to set that prince at defiance, and to maintain open war against him.

The authority of the English monarch was much

more extensive within his kingdom, and the disproportion much greater between him and the most powerful of his vassals. His demesnes and revenue were large, compared to the greatness of his state: he was accustomed to levy arbitrary exactions on his subjects: his courts of judicature extended their jurisdiction into every part of the kingdom: he could crush by his power, or by a judicial sentence, well or ill founded, any obnoxious baron: and though the feudal institutions which prevailed in his kingdom had the same tendency as in other states, to exalt the aristocracy and depress the monarchy, it required, in England, according to its present constitution, a great combination of the vassals to oppose their sovereign lord, and there had not hitherto arisen any baron so powerful as of himself to levy war against the prince, and to afford protection to the inferior barons.

While such were the different situations of France and England, and the latter enjoyed so many advantages above the former; the accession of Henry II. a prince of great abilities, possessed of so many rich provinces on the continent, might appear an event dangerous, if not fatal, to the French monarchy, and sufficient to break entirely the balance between the states. He was master, in the right of his father, of Anjou and Touraine; in that of his mother, of Normandy and Maine; in that of his wife, of Guienne, Poictou, Xaintogne, Auvergne, Perigord, Angoumois, the Limosin.

He soon after annexed Brittany to his other states, and was already possessed of the superiority over that province, which, on the first cession of Normandy to Rollo the Dane, had been granted by Charles the Simple in vassalage to that formidable ravager. These provinces composed above a third of the whole French monarchy, and were much superior in extent and opulence to those territories which were subjected to the immediate jurisdiction and government of the king. The vassal was here more powerful than his liege lord : the situation which had enabled Hugh Capet to depose the Carolingian princes, seemed to be renewed, and that with much greater advantages on the side of the vassal : and when England was added to so many provinces, the French king had reason to apprehend from this conjuncture, some great disaster to himself and to his family : but, in reality, it was this circumstance, which appeared so formidable, that saved the Capetian race, and by its consequences exalted them to that pitch of grandeur which they at present enjoy.

The limited authority of the prince in the feudal constitutions, prevented the king of England from employing with advantage the force of so many states, which were subjected to his government ; and these different members, disjoined in situation, and disagreeing in laws, language, and manners, were never thoroughly cemented into one monarchy. He soon became, both from his distant place of residence, and from the incompati-

bility of interests, a kind of foreigner to his French dominions ; and his subjects on the continent considered their allegiance as more naturally due to their superior lord, who lived in their neighbourhood, and who was acknowledged to be the supreme head of their nation. He was always at hand to invade them ; their immediate lord was often at too great a distance to protect them ; and any disorder in any part of his dispersed dominions gave advantages against him. The other powerful vassals of the French crown were rather pleased to see the expulsion of the English, and were not affected with that jealousy which would have arisen from the oppression of a co-vassal who was of the same rank with themselves. By this means, the king of France found it more easy to conquer those numerous provinces from England, than to subdue a duke of Normandy or Guienne, a count of Anjou, Maine, or Poictou. And after reducing such extensive territories, which immediately incorporated with the body of the monarchy, he found greater facility in uniting to the crown the other great fiefs which still remained separate and independent.

But as these important consequences could not be foreseen by human wisdom, the king of France remarked with terror the rising grandeur of the house of Anjou or Plantagenet ; and, in order to retard its progress, he had ever maintained a strict union with Stephen, and had endeavoured to support the tottering fortunes of that bold usurper.

But after this prince's death it was too late to think of opposing the succession of Henry, or preventing the performance of those stipulations which, with the unanimous consent of the nation, he had made with his predecessor. The English, harassed with civil wars, and disgusted with the bloodshed and depredations which, during the course of so many years, had attended them, were little disposed to violate their oaths, by excluding the lawful heir from the succession of their monarchy^a. Many of the most considerable fortresses were in the hands of his partisans; the whole nation had had occasion to see the noble qualities with which he was endowed^b, and to compare them with the mean talents of William, the son of Stephen; and as they were acquainted with his great power, and were rather pleased to see the accession of so many foreign dominions to the crown of England, they never entertained the least thought of resisting them. Henry himself, sensible of the advantages attending his present situation, was in no hurry to arrive in England; and being engaged in the siege of a castle on the frontiers of Normandy, when he received intelligence of Stephen's death, he made it a point of honour not to depart from his enterprise, till he had brought it to an issue. He then set out on his journey, and was received in England with the acclamations of all orders of men, who swore

^a Matth. Paris, p. 65.

^b Gul. Neubr. p. 381.

with pleasure the oath of fealty and allegiance to him.

FIRST ACTS OF HENRY'S GOVERNMENT.

THE first acts of Henry's government corresponded to the high idea entertained of his abilities, and prognosticated the re-establishment of justice and tranquillity, of which the kingdom had so long been bereaved. He immediately dismissed all those mercenary soldiers who had committed great disorders in the nation; and he sent them abroad, together with William of Ypres, their leader, the friend and confident of Stephen^c. He revoked all the grants made by his predecessor^d, even those which necessity had extorted from the empress Matilda; and that princess, who had resigned her rights in favour of Henry, made no opposition to a measure so necessary for supporting the dignity of the crown. He repaired the coin, which had been extremely debased during the reign of his predecessor; and he took proper measures against a return of the like abuse^e. He was rigorous in the execution of justice, and in the suppression of robbery and violence; and that he might restore authority to the laws, he caused all the new erected castles to be demolished, which had proved so many sanc-

^c Fitz-Steph. p. 13. M. Paris, p. 65. Neubr. p. 381. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 30. ^d Neubr. p. 382. ^e Hoveden, p. 491.

tuaries to freebooters and rebels^f. The earl of Albemarle, Hugh Mortimer, and Roger the son of Milo of Gloucester, were inclined to make some resistance to this salutary measure; but the approach of the king with his forces soon obliged them to submit.

Every thing being restored to full tranquillity in England, Henry went abroad in order to oppose the attempts of his brother Geoffrey, who, during his absence, had made an incursion into Anjou and Maine, had advanced some pretensions to those provinces, and had got possession of a considerable part of them *. On the king's appearance, the people returned to their allegiance; and Geoffrey, resigning his claim for an annual pension of a thousand pounds, departed and took possession of the county of Nantz, which the inhabitants, who had expelled count Hoel their prince, had put into his hands. Henry returned to England the following year: the incursions of the Welsh then provoked him to make an invasion upon them; where the natural fastnesses of the country occasioned him great difficulties, and even brought him into danger. His vanguard, being engaged in a narrow pass, was put to rout: Henry de Essex, the hereditary standard-bearer, seized with a panic, threw down the standard, took to flight, and exclaimed that the king was slain:

^f Hoveden, p. 491. Fitz-Steph. p. 13. M. Paris, p. 65. Neubr. p. 381. Brompton, p. 1043.

* See note O, vol. x.

and had not the prince immediately appeared in person, and led on his troops with great gallantry, the consequence might have proved fatal to the whole army^g. For this misbehaviour, Essex was afterwards accused of felony by Robert de Montfort; was vanquished in single combat; his estate was confiscated; and he himself was thrust into a convent^h. The submissions of the Welsh procured them an accommodation with England.

The martial disposition of the princes in that age engaged them to head their own armies in every enterprise, even the most frivolous; and their feeble authority made it commonly impracticable for them to delegate, on occasion, the command to their generals. Geoffrey, the king's brother, died soon after he had acquired possession of Nantz: though he had no other title to that country than the voluntary submission or election of the inhabitants two years before, Henry laid claim to the territory as devolved to him by hereditary right, and he went over to support his pretensions by force of arms. Conan, duke or earl of Brittany (for these titles are given indifferently by historians to those princes), pretended that Nantz had been lately separated by rebellion from his principality, to which of right it belonged; and immediately on Geoffrey's death he took possession of the disputed territory. Lest

^g Neubr. p. 383. Chron. W. Heming. p. 492.

^h M. Paris, p. 70. Neubr. p. 383.

Lewis the French king should interpose in the controversy, Henry paid him a visit; and so allured him by caresses and civilities, that an alliance was contracted between them; and they agreed that young Henry, heir to the English monarchy, should be affianced to Margaret of France; though the former was only five years of age, and the latter was still in her cradle. Henry, now secure of meeting with no interruption on this side, advanced with his army into Brittany; and Conan, in despair of being able to make resistance, delivered up the county of Nantz to him. The able conduct of the king procured him farther and more important advantages from this incident. Conan, harassed with the turbulent disposition of his subjects, was desirous of procuring to himself the support of so great a monarch; and he betrothed his daughter and only child, yet an infant, to Geoffrey the king's third son, who was of the same tender years. The duke of Brittany died about seven years after; and Henry, being *mesne* lord, and also natural guardian to his son and daughter-in-law, put himself in possession of that principality, and annexed it for the present to his other great dominions.

The king had a prospect of making still farther acquisitions; and the activity of his temper suffered no opportunity of that kind to escape him. Philippa, duchess of Guienne, mother of queen Eleanor, was the only issue of William IV. count of Toulouse; and would have inherited his domi-

nions, had not that prince, desirous of preserving the succession in the male line, conveyed the principality to his brother Raymond de St. Gilles, by a contract of sale which was in that age regarded as fictitious and illusory. By this means the title to the county of Toulouse came to be disputed between the male and female heirs; and the one or the other, as opportunities favoured them, had obtained possession. Raymond, grandson of Raymond de St. Gilles, was the reigning sovereign; and on Henry's reviving his wife's claim, this prince had recourse for protection to the king of France, who was so much concerned in policy to prevent the farther aggrandisement of the English monarch. Lewis himself, when married to Eleanor, had asserted the justice of her claim, and had demanded possession of Toulouseⁱ; but his sentiments changing with his interest, he now determined to defend by his power and authority the title of Raymond. Henry found that it would be requisite to support his pretensions against potent antagonists; and that nothing but a formidable army could maintain a claim which he had in vain asserted by arguments and manifestos.

An army, composed of feudal vassals, was commonly very intractable and undisciplined, both because of the independent spirit of the persons who served in it, and because the commands were

ⁱ Neubr. p. 387. Chron. W. Heming. p. 494.

not given, either by the choice of the sovereign, or from the military capacity and experience of the officers. Each baron conducted his own vassals: his rank was greater or less, proportioned to the extent of his property: even the supreme command under the prince was often attached to birth: and as the military vassals were obliged to serve only forty days at their own charge; though, if the expedition were distant, they were put to great expence; the prince reaped little benefit from their attendance. Henry, sensible of these inconveniences, levied upon his vassals in Normandy, and other provinces which were remote from Toulouse, a sum of money in lieu of their service; and this commutation, by reason of the great distance, was still more advantageous to his English vassals. He imposed, therefore, a scutage of 180,000 pounds on the knight's fees, a commutation to which, though it was unusual, and the first perhaps to be met with in history*, the military tenants willingly submitted; and with this money he levied an army which was more under his command, and whose service was more durable and constant. Assisted by Berenger count of Barcelona, and Trincaval count of Nismes, whom he had gained to his party, he invaded the county of Toulouse; and after taking Verdun, Castlenau, and other places, he besieged the capital of the province, and was likely to pre-

* Madox, p. 435. Gervase, p. 1381. See note P, vol. x.

vail in the enterprise ; when Lewis, advancing before the arrival of his main body, threw himself into the place with a small reinforcement. Henry was urged by some of his ministers to prosecute the siege, to take Lewis prisoner, and to impose his own terms in the pacification ; but he either thought it so much his interest to maintain the feudal principles, by which his foreign dominions were secured, or bore so much respect to his superior lord, that he declared he would not attack a place defended by him in person ; and he immediately raised the siege^k. He marched into Normandy to protect that province against an incursion which the count of Dreux, instigated by king Lewis his brother, had made upon it. War was now openly carried on between the two monarchs, but produced no memorable event : it soon ended in a cessation of arms, and that followed by a peace, which was not, however, attended with any confidence or good correspondence between those rival princes. The fortress of Gisors, being part of the dowry stipulated to Margaret of France, had been consigned by agreement to the knights templars, on condition that it should be delivered into Henry's hands after the celebration of the nuptials. The king, that he might have a pretence for immediately demanding the place, ordered the marriage to be solemnized between the prince and princess, though both infants^l;

^k Fitz-Steph. p. 22. Diceto, p. 531.

^l Hoveden, p. 492. Neubr. p. 400. Diceto, p. 532. Brompton, p. 1450.

and he engaged the grand master of the templars, by large presents, as was generally suspected, to put him in possession of Gisors^m. Lewis, resenting this fraudulent conduct, banished the templars, and would have made war upon the king of England, had it not been for the mediation and authority of pope Alexander III. who had been chased from Rome by the anti-pope Victor IV. and resided at that time in France. That we may form an idea of the authority possessed by the Roman pontiff during those ages, it may be proper to observe that the two kings had, the year before, met the pope at the castle of Torci on the Loir; and they gave him such marks of respect, that both dismounted to receive him, and holding each of them one of the reins of his bridle, walked on foot by his side, and conducted him in that submissive manner into the castleⁿ. *A spectacle*, cries Baronius in an ecstasy, *to God, angels, and men; and such as had never before been exhibited to the world!*

Henry, soon after he had accommodated his differences with Lewis by the pope's mediation, returned to England; where he commenced an enterprise, which, though required by sound policy, and even conducted in the main with prudence, bred him great disquietude, involved him

^m Since the first publication of this history, Lord Lyttleton has published a copy of the treaty between Henry and Lewis, by which it appears, if there was no secret article, that Henry was not guilty of any fraud in this transaction.

ⁿ Trivet, p. 43.

in danger, and was not concluded without some loss and dishonour.

DISPUTES BETWEEN THE CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL POWERS.

THE usurpations of the clergy, which had at first been gradual, were now become so rapid, and had mounted to such a height, that the contest between the regale and pontificale was really arrived at a crisis in England; and it became necessary to determine whether the king or the priests, particularly the archbishop of Canterbury, should be sovereign of the kingdom°. The aspiring spirit of Henry, which gave inquietude to all his neighbours, was not likely long to pay a tame submission to the encroachments of subjects; and as nothing opens the eyes of men so readily as their interest, he was in no danger of falling, in this respect, into that abject superstition which retained his people in subjection. From the commencement of his reign, in the government of his foreign dominions, as well as of England, he had shown a fixed purpose to repress clerical usurpations, and to maintain those prerogatives which had been transmitted to him by his predecessors. During the schism of the papacy between Alexander and Victor, he had determined, for some time, to remain neuter: and when in

° Fitz-Stephen, p. 27.

formed that the archbishop of Rouën and the bishop of Mans had, from their own authority, acknowledged Alexander as legitimate pope, he was so enraged, that though he spared the archbishop on account of his great age, he immediately issued orders for overthrowing the houses of the bishop of Mans and archdeacon of Rouën *; and it was not till he had deliberately examined the matter, by those views which usually enter into the councils of princes, that he allowed that pontiff to exercise authority over any of his dominions. In England, the mild character and advanced years of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, together with his merits in refusing to put the crown on the head of Eustace, son of Stephen, prevented Henry, during the life-time of that primate, from taking any measures against the multiplied encroachments of the clergy: but after his death, the king resolved to exert himself with more activity; and that he might be secure against any opposition, he advanced to that dignity Becket his chancellor, on whose compliance he thought he could entirely depend.

THOMAS A BECKET, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY. JUNE 3.

THOMAS A BECKET, the first man of English descent who, since the Norman conquest, had,

* See Note Q. vol. x.

during the course of a whole century, risen to any considerable station, was born of reputable parents in the city of London; and being endowed both with industry and capacity, he early insinuated himself into the favour of archbishop Theobald, and obtained from that prelate some preferments and offices. By their means he was enabled to travel for improvement to Italy, where he studied the civil and canon law at Bologna; and on his return he appeared to have made such proficiency in knowledge, that he was promoted by his patron to the archdeaconry of Canterbury, an office of considerable trust and profit. He was afterwards employed with success by Theobald in transacting business at Rome; and on Henry's accession he was recommended to that monarch as worthy of farther preferment. Henry, who knew that Becket had been instrumental in supporting that resolution of the archbishop, which had tended so much to facilitate his own advancement to the throne, was already prepossessed in his favour; and finding, on farther acquaintance, that his spirit and abilities entitled him to any trust, he soon promoted him to the dignity of chancellor, one of the first civil offices in the kingdom. The chancellor, in that age, besides the custody of the great seal, had possession of all vacant prelacies and abbies; he was the guardian of all such minors and pupils as were the king's tenants; all baronies which escheated to the crown were under his administration; he was entitled to a place

in council, even though he were not particularly summoned; and as he exercised also the office of secretary of state, and it belonged to him to countersign all commissions, writs, and letters-patent, he was a kind of prime minister, and was concerned in the dispatch of every business of importance^p. Besides exercising this high office, Becket, by the favour of the king or archbishop, was made provost of Beverley, dean of Hastings, and constable of the Tower: he was put in possession of the honours of Eye and Berkham, large baronies that had escheated to the crown: and to complete his grandeur, he was entrusted with the education of prince Henry, the king's eldest son, and heir of the monarchy^q. The pomp of his retinue, the sumptuousness of his furniture, the luxury of his table, the munificence of his presents, corresponded to these great preferments; or rather exceeded any thing that England had ever before seen in any subject. His historian and secretary, Fitz-Stephens^r, mentions, among other particulars, that his apartments were every day in winter covered with clean straw or hay, and in summer with green rushes or boughs; lest the gentlemen who paid court to him, and who could not, by reason of their great number, find a place at table, should soil their fine cloaths by sitting on a dirty floor^s. A great number of

^p Fitz-Steph. p. 13. ^q Ibid. p. 15. Hist. Quad. p. 914. ^r P. 15.

^s John Baldwin held the manor of Oterasfee in Aylesbury of the king in soccage, by the service of finding litter for the king's

knights were retained in his service ; the greatest barons were proud of being received at his table ; his house was a place of education for the sons of the chief nobility ; and the king himself frequently vouchsafed to partake of his entertainments. As his way of life was splendid and opulent, his amusements and occupations were gay, and partook of the cavalier spirit, which, as he had only taken deacon's orders, he did not think unbefitting his character. He employed himself at leisure hours in hunting, hawking, gaming, and horsemanship ; he exposed his person in several military actions^t ; he carried over, at his own charge, seven hundred knights, to attend the king in his wars at Toulouse ; in the subsequent wars on the frontiers of Normandy he maintained, during forty days, twelve hundred knights, and four thousand of their train^u ; and in an embassy to France, with which he was entrusted, he astonished that court by the number and magnificence of his retinue.

Henry, besides committing all his more important business to Becket's management, honoured him with his friendship and intimacy ; and whenever he was disposed to relax himself by

bed, viz. in summer, grass or herbs, and two grey geese ; and in winter, straw, and three eels, thrice in the year, if the king should come thrice in the year to Aylesbury. Madox, Bar. Anglica, p. 247.

^t Fitz-Steph. p. 23. Hist. Quad. p. 9.

^u Fitz-Steph. p. 19, 20, 22, 23.

sports of any kind, he admitted his chancellor to the party^x. An instance of their familiarity is mentioned by Fitz-Stephens, which, as it shews the manners of the age, it may not be improper to relate. One day, as the king and the chancellor were riding together in the streets of London, they observed a beggar who was shivering with cold. Would it not be very praise-worthy, said the king, to give that poor man a warm coat in this severe season? It would, surely, replied the chancellor; and you do well, sir, in thinking of such good actions. Then he shall have one presently, cried the king: and seizing the skirt of the chancellor's coat, which was scarlet, and lined with ermine, began to pull it violently. The chancellor defended himself for some time; and they had both of them like to have tumbled off their horses in the street, when Becket, after a vehement struggle, let go his coat; which the king bestowed on the beggar, who, being ignorant of the quality of the persons, was not a little surprised at the present^y.

Becket, who by his complaisance and good-humour had rendered himself agreeable, and by his industry and abilities useful to his master, appeared to him the fittest person for supplying the vacancy made by the death of Theobald. As he was well acquainted with the king's intentions^z of

^x Fitz-Steph. p. 16. Hist. Quad. p. 8.

^y Ibid. p. 16. ^z Ibid. p. 17.

retrenching, or rather confining within the ancient bounds, all ecclesiastical privileges, and always showed a ready disposition to comply with them^a, Henry, who never expected any resistance from that quarter, immediately issued orders for electing him archbishop of Canterbury. But this resolution, which was taken contrary to the opinion of Matilda, and many of the ministers^b, drew after it very unhappy consequences; and never prince of so great penetration appeared in the issue to have so little understood the genius and character of his minister.

No sooner was Becket installed in this high dignity, which rendered him for life the second person in the kingdom, with some pretensions of aspiring to be the first, than he totally altered his demeanor and conduct, and endeavoured to acquire the character of sanctity, of which his former busy and ostentatious course of life might, in the eyes of the people, have naturally bereaved him. Without consulting the king, he immediately returned into his hands the commission of chancellor; pretending that he must thenceforth detach himself from secular affairs, and be solely employed in the exercise of his spiritual function; but in reality, that he might break off all connections with Henry, and apprise him that Becket, as primate of England, was now become entirely a new personage. He maintained, in his retinue and

^a Fitz-Steph. p. 23. Epist. St. Thom. p. 232.

^b Epist. St. Thom. p. 167.

attendants alone, his ancient pomp and lustre, which was useful to strike the vulgar: in his own person he affected the greatest austerity and most rigid mortification, which he was sensible would have an equal or a greater tendency to the same end. He wore sack-cloth next his skin, which, by his affected care to conceal it, was necessarily the more remarked by all the world: he changed it so seldom, that it was filled with dirt and vermin: his usual diet was bread; his drink water, which he even rendered farther unpalatable by the mixture of unsavoury herbs: he tore his back with the frequent discipline which he inflicted on it: he daily on his knees washed, in imitation of Christ, the feet of thirteen beggars, whom he afterwards dismissed with presents^c: he gained the affections of the monks by his frequent charities to the convents and hospitals: every one who made profession of sanctity was admitted to his conversation, and returned full of panegyrics on the humility, as well as on the piety and mortification, of the holy primate: he seemed to be perpetually employed in reciting prayers and pious lectures, or in perusing religious discourses: his aspect wore the appearance of seriousness and mental recollection, and secret devotion: and all men of penetration plainly saw that he was meditating some great design, and that the ambition and ostentation of his character had turned itself towards a new and more dangerous object.

^c Fitz-Steph. p. 25. Hist. Quad. p. 19.

QUARREL BETWEEN THE KING AND BECKET.

BECKET waited not till Henry should commence those projects against the ecclesiastical power, which he knew had been formed by that prince: he was himself the aggressor, and endeavoured to overawe the king by the intrepidity and boldness of his enterprises. He summoned the earl of Clare to surrender the barony of Tunbridge, which ever since the conquest had remained in the family of that nobleman; but which, as it had formerly belonged to the see of Canterbury, Becket pretended his predecessors were prohibited by the canons to alienate. The earl of Clare, besides the lustre which he derived from the greatness of his own birth, and the extent of his possessions, was allied to all the principal families in the kingdom; his sister, who was a celebrated beauty, had farther extended his credit among the nobility, and was even supposed to have gained the king's affections; and Becket could not better discover, than by attacking so powerful an interest, his resolution of maintaining with vigour the rights, real or pretended, of his see^d.

William de Eynsford, a military tenant of the crown, was patron of a living which belonged to a manor that held of the archbishop of Canter-

^d Fitz-Steph. p. 28. Gervase, p. 1384.

bury: but Becket, without regard to William's right, presented, on a new and legal pretext, one Laurence to that living, who was violently expelled by Eynsford. The primate making himself, as was usual in spiritual courts, both judge and party, issued in a summary manner the sentence of excommunication against Eynsford, who complained to the king that he who held *in capite* of the crown should, contrary to the practice established by the Conqueror, and maintained ever since by his successors, be subjected to that terrible sentence, without the previous consent of the sovereign^e. Henry, who had now broken off all personal intercourse with Becket, sent him, by a messenger, his orders to absolve Eynsford; but received for answer, that it belonged not to the king to inform him whom he should absolve and whom excommunicate^f: and it was not till after many remonstrances and menaces, that Becket, though with the worst grace imaginable, was induced to comply with the royal mandate.

Henry, though he found himself thus grievously mistaken in the character of the person whom he had promoted to the primacy, determined not to desist from his former intention of retrenching clerical usurpations. He was entirely master of his extensive dominions: the prudence and vigour of his administration, attended with perpetual success, had raised his character above that of

^e M. Paris, p. 7. Diceto, p. 536. ^f Fitz-Steph. p. 28.

his predecessors⁵: the papacy seemed to be weakened by a schism, which divided all Europe: and he rightly judged, that if the present favourable opportunity were neglected, the crown must, from the prevalent superstition of the people, be in danger of falling into an entire subordination under the mitre.

The union of the civil and ecclesiastical power serves extremely, in every civilized government, to the maintenance of peace and order; and prevents those mutual encroachments which, as there can be no ultimate judge between them, are often attended with the most dangerous consequences. Whether the supreme magistrate, who unites these powers, receives the appellation of prince or prelate, is not material: the superior weight which temporal interests commonly bear in the apprehensions of men above spiritual, renders the civil part of his character most prevalent; and in time prevents those gross impostures and bigotted persecutions, which in all false religions are the chief foundations of clerical authority. But during the progress of ecclesiastical usurpations, the state, by the resistance of the civil magistrate, is naturally thrown into convulsions; and it behoves the prince, both for his own interest, and for that of the public, to provide in time sufficient barriers against so dangerous and insidious a rival. This precaution had hitherto been much neglected in Eng-

⁵ Epist. St. Thom. p. 130.

land, as well as in other catholic countries ; and affairs at last seemed to have come to a dangerous crisis : a sovereign of the greatest abilities was now on the throne : a prelate of the most inflexible and intrepid character was possessed of the primacy : the contending powers appeared to be armed with their full force, and it was natural to expect some extraordinary event to result from their conflict.

Among their other inventions to obtain money, the clergy had inculcated the necessity of penance as an atonement for sin ; and having again introduced the practice of paying them large sums as a commutation, or species of atonement for the remission of those penances, the sins of the people, by these means, had become a revenue to the priests ; and the king computed, that by this invention alone they levied more money upon his subjects than flowed, by all the funds and taxes, into the royal exchequer ^h. That he might ease the people of so heavy and arbitrary an imposition, Henry required that a civil officer of his appointment should be present in all ecclesiastical courts, and should for the future give his consent to every composition which was made with sinners for their spiritual offences.

The ecclesiastics in that age had renounced all immediate subordination to the magistrate : they openly pretended to an exemption in criminal ac-

^h Fitz-Steph. p. 32.

cusations from a trial before courts of justice ; and were gradually introducing a like exemption in civil causes : spiritual penalties alone could be inflicted on their offences : and as the clergy had extremely multiplied in England, and many of them were consequently of very low characters, crimes of the deepest dye, murders, robberies, adulteries, rapes, were daily committed with impunity by the ecclesiastics. It had been found, for instance, on enquiry, that no less than a hundred murders had, since the king's accession, been perpetrated by men of that profession, who had never been called to account for these offencesⁱ; and holy orders were become a full protection for all enormities. A clerk in Worcestershire, having debauched a gentleman's daughter, had at this time proceeded to murder the father; and the general indignation against this crime moved the king to attempt the remedy of an abuse which was become so palpable, and to require that the clerk should be delivered up, and receive condign punishment from the magistrate^k. Becket insisted on the privileges of the church; confined the criminal in the bishop's prison, lest he should be seized by the king's officers; maintained that no greater punishment could be inflicted on him than degradation: and when the king demanded, that immediately after he was degraded he should be tried by the civil power, the primate asserted

ⁱ Neubr. p. 394.^k Fitz-Steph. p. 32. Hist. Quad. p. 32.

that it was iniquitous to try a man twice upon the same accusation, and for the same offence¹.

Henry laying hold of so plausible a pretence, resolved to push the clergy with regard to all their privileges, which they had raised to an enormous height, and to determine at once those controversies which daily multiplied between the civil and the ecclesiastical jurisdictions. He summoned an assembly of all the prelates of England; and he put to them this concise and decisive question, Whether or not they were willing to submit to the ancient laws and customs of the kingdom? The bishops unanimously replied, that they were willing, *saving their own order*^m: a device by which they thought to elude the present urgency of the king's demand, yet reserve to themselves, on a favourable opportunity, the power of resuming all their pretensions. The king was sensible of the artifice, and was provoked to the highest indignation. He left the assembly with visible marks of his displeasure: he required the primate instantly to surrender the honours and castles of Eye and Berkham: the bishops were terrified, and expected still farther effects of his resentment. Becket alone was inflexible; and nothing but the interposition of the pope's legate and almoner, Philip, who dreaded a breach with so powerful a prince at

¹ Fitz-Steph. p. 29. Hist. Quad. p. 33, 45. Hoveden, p. 492. M. Paris, p. 72. Diceto, p. 536, 537. Brompton, p. 1058. Gervase, p. 1384. Epist. St. Thom. p. 208, 209.

^m Fitz-Steph. p. 31. Hist. Quad. p. 34. Hoveden, p. 492.

so unseasonable a juncture, could have prevailed on him to retract the saving clause, and give a general and absolute promise of observing the ancient customs^a.

But Henry was not content with a declaration in these general terms: he resolved, ere it was too late, to define expressly those customs, with which he required compliance, and to put a stop to clerical usurpations before they were fully consolidated, and could plead antiquity, as they already did a sacred authority, in their favour. The claims of the church were open and visible. After a gradual and insensible progress during many centuries, the mask had at last been taken off, and several ecclesiastical councils, by their canons, which were pretended to be irrevocable and infallible, had positively defined those privileges and immunities, which gave such general offence, and appeared so dangerous to the civil magistrate. Henry therefore deemed it necessary to define with the same precision the limits of the civil power; to oppose his legal customs to their divine ordinances; to determine the exact boundaries of the rival jurisdictions; and for this purpose he summoned a general council of the nobility and prelates at Clarendon, to whom he submitted this great and important question.

^a Hist. Quad. p. 37. Hoveden, p. 493. Gervase, p. 1385.

CONSTITUTIONS OF CLARENDON.

JANUARY 25.

THE barons were all gained to the king's party, either by the reasons which he urged, or by his superior authority: the bishops were overawed by the general combination against them: and the following laws, commonly called the *Constitutions of Clarendon*, were voted without opposition by this assembly°. It was enacted, that all suits concerning the advowson and presentation of churches should be determined in the civil courts: that the churches belonging to the king's see should not be granted in perpetuity without his consent: that clerks accused of any crime should be tried in the civil courts: that no person, particularly no clergyman of any rank, should depart the kingdom without the king's licence: that excommunicated persons should not be bound to give security for continuing in their present place of abode: that laics should not be accused in spiritual courts, except by legal and reputable promoters and witnesses: that no chief tenant of the crown should be excommunicated, nor his lands be put under an interdict, except with the king's consent: that all appeals in spiritual causes should be carried from the archdeacon to the bishop, from the bishop to the primate, from him

° Fitz-Steph. p. 33.

to the king; and should be carried no farther without the king's consent: That if any law-suit arose between a layman and a clergyman concerning a tenant, and it be disputed whether the land be a lay or an ecclesiastical fee, it should first be determined by the verdict of twelve lawful men to what class it belonged; and if it be found to be a lay-fee, the cause should finally be determined in the civil courts: That no inhabitant in demesne should be excommunicated for non-appearance in a spiritual court, till the chief officer of the place where he resides be consulted, that he may compel him by the civil authority to give satisfaction to the church: That the archbishops, bishops, and other spiritual dignitaries, should be regarded as barons of the realm; should possess the privileges and be subjected to the burthens belonging to that rank; and should be bound to attend the king in his great councils, and assist at all trials, till the sentence, either of death or loss of members, be given against the criminal: That the revenue of vacant sees should belong to the king; the chapter or such of them as he pleases to summon, should sit in the king's chapel till they made the new election with his consent, and that the bishop-elect should do homage to the crown: That if any baron or tenant *in capite* should refuse to submit to the spiritual courts, the king should employ his authority in obliging him to make such submissions; if any of them throw off his allegiance to the king, the prelates should assist

the king with their censures in reducing him : That goods forfeited to the king should not be protected in churches or churchyards : That the clergy should no longer pretend to the right of enforcing payment of debts contracted by oath or promise ; but should leave these law-suits, equally with others, to the determination of the civil courts : And that the sons of villains should not be ordained clerks, without the consent of their lord^p.

These articles, to the number of sixteen, were calculated to prevent the chief abuses which had prevailed in ecclesiastical affairs, and to put an effectual stop to the usurpations of the church, which, gradually stealing on, had threatened the total destruction of the civil power. Henry, therefore, by reducing those ancient customs of the realm to writing, and by collecting them in a body, endeavoured to prevent all future dispute with regard to them ; and by passing so many ecclesiastical ordinances in a national and civil assembly, he fully established the superiority of the legislature above all papal decrees or spiritual canons, and gained a signal victory over the ecclesiastics. But as he knew, that the bishops, though overawed by the present combination of the crown and the barons, would take the first favourable opportunity of denying the authority

^p Hist. Quad. p. 163. M. Paris, p. 70, 71. Spelm. Conc. vol. ii. p. 63. Gervase, p. 1386, 1387. Wilkins, p. 321.

which had enacted these constitutions, he resolved that they should all set their seal to them, and give a promise to observe them. None of the prelates dared to oppose his will; except Becket, who, though urged by the earls of Cornwall and Leicester, the barons of principal authority in the kingdom, obstinately withheld his assent. At last, Richard de Hastings, grand prior of the templars in England, threw himself on his knees before him; and with many tears entreated him, if he paid any regard either to his own safety or that of the church, not to provoke, by a fruitless opposition, the indignation of a great monarch, who was resolutely bent on his purpose, and who was determined to take full revenge on every one that should dare to oppose him^a. Becket, finding himself deserted by all the world, even by his own brethren, was at last obliged to comply; and he promised, *legally, with good faith, and without fraud or reserve*^r, to observe the constitutions; and he took an oath to that purpose^s. The king, thinking that he had now finally prevailed in this great enterprise, sent the constitutions to pope Alexander, who then resided in France; and he required that pontiff's ratification of them: but Alexander, who, though he had owed the most important obligations to the

^a Hist. Quad. p. 38. Hoveden, p. 493. ^r Fitz-Steph. p. 35. Epist. St. Thom. p. 25. ^s Fitz-Steph. p. 45. Hist. Quad. p. 39. Gervase, p. 1386.

king, plainly saw that these laws were calculated to establish the independency of England on the papacy, and of the royal power on the clergy, condemned them in the strongest terms; abrogated, annulled, and rejected them. There were only six articles, the least important, which, for the sake of peace, he was willing to ratify.

Becket, when he observed that he might hope for support in an opposition, expressed the deepest sorrow for his compliance; and endeavoured to engage all the other bishops in a confederacy to adhere to their common rights, and to the ecclesiastical privileges, in which he represented the interest and honour of God to be so deeply concerned. He redoubled his austerities, in order to punish himself for his criminal consent to the constitutions of Clarendon; he proportioned his discipline to the enormity of his supposed offence; and he refused to exercise any part of his archiepiscopal function, till he should receive absolution from the pope; which was readily granted him. Henry, informed of his present dispositions, resolved to take vengeance for this refractory behaviour, and he attempted to crush him, by means of that very power which Becket made such merit in supporting. He applied to the pope, that he should grant the commission of legate in his dominions to the archbishop of York; but Alexander, as politic as he, though he granted the commission, annexed a clause, that it should not

impower the legate to execute any act in prejudice of the archbishop of Canterbury¹: and the king, finding how fruitless such an authority would prove, sent back the commission by the same messenger that brought it².

The primate, however, who found himself still exposed to the king's indignation, endeavoured twice to escape secretly from the kingdom; but was as often detained by contrary winds: and Henry hastened to make him feel the effects of an obstinacy which he deemed so criminal. He instigated John, mareschal of the exchequer, to sue Becket in the archiepiscopal court for some lands, part of the manor of Pageham; and to appeal thence to the king's court for justice³. On the day appointed for trying the cause, the primate sent four knights to represent certain irregularities in John's appeal; and at the same time to excuse himself, on account of sickness, for not appearing personally that day in the court. This slight offence (if it even deserve the name) was represented as a grievous contempt; the four knights were menaced, and with difficulty escaped being sent to prison, as offering falsehoods to the court⁴; and Henry, being determined to prosecute Becket to the utmost, summoned, at Northampton, a great council, which he purposed to make the instrument of his vengeance against the inflexible prelate.

¹ Epist. St. Thom. p. 13, 14. ² Hoveden, p. 493. Gervase, p. 1388. ³ Hoveden, p. 494. M. Paris, p. 72. Diceto, p. 537. ⁴ See note [R] vol. X.

The king had raised Becket from a low station to the highest offices, had honoured him with his countenance and friendship, had trusted to his assistance in forwarding his favourite project against the clergy ; and when he found him become of a sudden his most rigid opponent, while every one beside complied with his will, rage at the disappointment, and indignation against such signal ingratitude, transported him beyond all bounds of moderation ; and there seems to have entered more of passion than of justice, or even of policy, in this violent prosecution^y. The barons, notwithstanding, in the great council, voted whatever sentence he was pleased to dictate to them ; and the bishops themselves, who undoubtedly bore a secret favour to Becket, and regarded him as the champion of their privileges, concurred with the rest, in the design of oppressing their primate. In vain did Becket urge that his court was proceeding with the utmost regularity and justice in trying the mareschal's cause ; which, however, he said, would appear from the sheriff's testimony to be entirely unjust and iniquitous : that he himself had discovered no contempt of the king's court ; but, on the contrary, by sending four knights to excuse his absence, had virtually acknowledged its authority : that he also, in consequence of the king's summons, personally appeared at present in the great council, ready to justify his cause

^y Neubr. p. 394.

against the mareschal, and to submit his conduct to their enquiry and jurisdiction: that even should it be found that he had been guilty of non-appearance, the laws had affixed a very slight penalty to that offence: and that, as he was an inhabitant of Kent, where his archiepiscopal palace was seated, he was by law entitled to some greater indulgence than usual in the rate of his fine^a. Notwithstanding these pleas, he was condemned as guilty of a contempt of the king's court, and as wanting in the fealty which he had sworn to his sovereign; all his goods and chattels were confiscated^a; and that this triumph over the church might be carried to the utmost, Henry bishop of Winchester, the prelate who had been so powerful in the former reign, was, in spite of his remonstrances, obliged, by order of the court, to pronounce the sentence against him^b. The primate submitted to the decree; and all the prelates, except Folliot, bishop of London, who paid court to the king by this singularity, became sureties for him^c. It is remarkable, that several Norman barons voted in this council; and we may conclude, with some probability, that a like practice had prevailed in many of the great councils summoned since the conquest. For the contemporary historian, who has given us a full account of these transactions, does not mention

^a Fitz-Steph. p. 37, 42.

^a Hist. Quad. p. 47. Hoveden,

p. 494. Gervase, p. 1389.

^b Fitz-Steph. p. 37.

^c Ibid.

this circumstance as any wise singular^d; and Becket, in all his subsequent remonstrances, with regard to the severe treatment which he had met with, never founds any objection on an irregularity, which to us appears very palpable and flagrant. So little precision was there at that time in the government and constitution !

The king was not content with this sentence, however violent and oppressive. Next day, he demanded of Becket the sum of three hundred pounds, which the primate had levied upon the honours of Eye and Berkham, while in his possession. Becket, after premising that he was not obliged to answer to this suit, because it was not contained in his summons ; after remarking that he had expended more than that sum in the repairs of those castles, and of the royal palace at London ; expressed however his resolution, that money should not be any ground of quarrel between him and his sovereign : he agreed to pay the sum ; and immediately gave sureties for it^e. In the subsequent meeting, the king demanded five hundred marks, which, he affirmed, he had lent Becket during the war at Toulouse^f; and another sum to the same amount, for which that prince had been surety for him to a Jew. Immediately after these two claims, he preferred a third of still greater importance : he required him to give in the accounts of his administration while

^d Fitz-Steph. p. 36.

^e Ibid. p. 38.

^f Hist. Quad. p. 47.

chancellor, and to pay the balance due from the revénues of all the prelacies, abbies, and baronies, which had, during that time, been subjected to his management^g. Becket observed, that, as this demand was totally unexpected, he had not come prepared to answer it; but he required a delay, and promised in that case to give satisfaction. The king insisted upon sureties; and Becket desired leave to consult his suffragans in a case of such importance^h.

It is apparent, from the known character of Henry, and from the usual vigilance of his government, that, when he promoted Becket to the see of Canterbury, he was, on good grounds, well pleased with his administration in the former high office with which he had entrusted him; and that, even if that prelate had dissipated money beyond the income of his place, the king was satisfied that his expences were not blameable, and had in the main been calculated for his serviceⁱ. Two years had since elapsed; no demand had, during that time, been made upon him; it was not till the quarrel arose concerning ecclesiastical privileges, that the claim was started, and the primate was, of a sudden, required to produce accounts of such intricacy and extent before a tribunal which had shewn a determined resolution to ruin and oppress him. To find sureties, that he should

^g Hoveden, p. 494. Diceto, p. 537.

^h Fitz-Steph. p. 38.

ⁱ Hoveden, p. 495.

answer so boundless and uncertain a claim, which in the king's estimation amounted to 44,000 marks^k, was impracticable; and Becket's suffragans were extremely at a loss what counsel to give him in such a critical emergency. By the advice of the bishop of Winchester he offered two thousand marks as a general satisfaction for all demands: but this offer was rejected by the king^l. Some prelates exhorted him to resign his see, on condition of receiving an acquittal: others were of opinion, that he ought to submit himself entirely to the king's mercy^m: but the primate, thus pushed to the utmost, had too much courage to sink under oppression: he determined to brave all his enemies, to trust to the sacredness of his character for protection, to involve his cause with that of God and religion, and to stand the utmost efforts of royal indignation.

After a few days spent in deliberation, Becket went to church, and said mass, where he had previously ordered, that the introit to the communion service should begin with these words, *Princes sat and spake against me*; the passage appointed for the martyrdom of St. Stephen, whom the primate thereby tacitly pretended to resemble in his sufferings for the sake of righteousness. He went thence to court, arrayed in his sacred vestments: as soon as he arrived within the palace-gate, he took the cross into his own hands, bore it aloft as

^k Epist. St. Thom. p. 315.

^l Fitz-Steph. p. 38.

^m Fitz-Steph. p. 39. Gervase, p. 1390.

his protection, and marched in that posture into the royal apartmentsⁿ. The king, who was in an inner room, was astonished at this parade, by which the primate seemed to menace him and his court with the sentence of excommunication; and he sent for some of the prelates to remonstrate with him on account of such audacious behaviour. These prelates complained to Becket, that, by subscribing himself to the constitutions of Clarendon, he had seduced them to imitate his example; and that now, when it was too late, he pretended to shake off all subordination to the civil power, and appeared desirous of involving them in the guilt which must attend any violation of those laws, established by their consent, and ratified by their subscriptions^o. Becket replied, that he had indeed subscribed the constitutions of Clarendon, *legally, with good faith, and without fraud or reserve*; but in these words was virtually implied a salvo for the rights of their order, which, being connected with the cause of God and his church, could never be relinquished by their oaths and engagements: that if he and they had erred in resigning the ecclesiastical privileges, the best atonement they could now make was to retract their consent, which, in such a case, could never be obligatory, and to follow the pope's authority, who had solemnly annulled the constitutions of

ⁿ Fitz-Steph. p. 40. Hist. Quad. p. 53. Hoveden, p. 404. Neubr. p. 394. Epist. St. Thom. p. 43. ^o Fitz-Steph. p. 35.

Clarendon, and had absolved them from all oaths which they had taken to observe them : that a determined resolution was evidently embraced to oppress the church ; the storm had first broken upon him ; for a slight offence, and which too was falsely imputed to him, he had been tyrannically condemned to a grievous penalty ; a new and unheard-of claim was since started, in which he could expect no justice ; and he plainly saw, that he was the destined victim, who, by his ruin, must prepare the way for the abrogation of all spiritual immunities : that he strictly inhibited them who were his suffragans from assisting at any such trial, or giving their sanction to any sentence against him ; he put himself and his see under the protection of the supreme pontiff ; and appealed to him against any penalty which his iniquitous judges might think proper to inflict upon him : and that however terrible the indignation of so great a monarch as Henry, his sword could only kill the body ; while that of the church, entrusted into the hands of the primate, could kill the soul, and throw the disobedient into infinite and eternal perdition^p.

Appeals to the pope, even in ecclesiastical causes, had been abolished by the constitutions of Clarendon, and were become criminal by law ; but an appeal in a civil cause, such as the king's demand

^p Fitz-Steph. p. 42, 44, 45, 46. Hist. Quad. p. 57. Hoveden, p. 495. M. Paris, p. 72. Epist. St. Thom. p. 45, 195. .

upon Becket, was a practice altogether new and unprecedented ; it tended directly to the subversion of the government, and could receive no colour of excuse, except from the determined resolution, which was but too apparent in Henry and the great council, to effectuate, without justice, but under colour of law, the total ruin of the inflexible primate. The king, having now obtained a pretext so much more plausible for his violence, would probably have pushed the affair to the utmost extremity against him ; but Becket gave him no leisure to conduct the prosecution. He refused so much as to hear the sentence, which the barons, sitting apart from the bishops, and joined to some sheriffs and barons of the second rank^a, had given upon the king's claim : he departed from the palace ; asked Henry's immediate permission to leave Northampton ; and upon meeting with a refusal, he withdrew secretly ; wandered about in disguise for some time ; and at last took shipping, and arrived safely at Gravelines.

The violent and unjust prosecution of Becket had a natural tendency to turn the public favour on his side, and to make men overlook his former

^a Fitz-Steph. p. 46. This historian is supposed to mean the more considerable vassals of the chief barons : these had no title to sit in the great council, and the giving them a place there was a palpable irregularity ; which however is not insisted on in any of Becket's remonstrances. A farther proof how little fixed the constitution was at that time.

ingratitude towards the king, and his departure from all oaths and engagements, as well as the enormity of those ecclesiastical privileges, of which he affected to be the champion. There were many other reasons which procured him countenance and protection in foreign countries. Philip earl of Flanders^r, and Lewis king of France^s, jealous of the rising greatness of Henry, were well pleased to give him disturbance in his government; and forgetting that this was the common cause of princes, they affected to pity extremely the condition of the exiled primate; and the latter even honoured him with a visit at Soissons, in which city he had invited him to fix his residence^t. The pope, whose interests were more immediately concerned in supporting him, gave a cold reception to a magnificent embassy which Henry sent to accuse him; while Becket himself, who had come to Sens in order to justify his cause before the sovereign pontiff, was received with the greatest marks of distinction. The king, in revenge, sequestered the revenues of Canterbury; and by a conduct which might be esteemed arbitrary, had there been at that time any regular check on royal authority, he banished all the primate's relations and domestics, to the number of four hundred, whom he obliged to swear, before their departure, that they would instantly join their patron. But this policy, by which Henry endeavoured to

^r Epist. St. Thom. p. 36. ^s Ibid. p. 36, 37. ^t Hist. Quad.
p. 76.

reduce Becket sooner to necessity, lost its effect: the pope, when they arrived beyond sea, absolved them from their oath, and distributed them among the convents in France and Flanders: a residence was assigned to Becket himself in the convent of Pontigny, where he lived for some years in great magnificence, partly from a pension granted him on the revenues of that abbey, partly from remittances made him by the French monarch.

The more to ingratiate himself with the pope, Becket resigned into his hands the see of Canterbury, to which, he affirmed, he had been uncanonically elected by the authority of the royal mandate; and Alexander, in his turn, besides investing him anew with that dignity, pretended to abrogate, by a bull, the sentence which the great council of England had passed against him. Henry, after attempting in vain to procure a conference with the pope, who departed soon after for Rome, whither the prosperous state of his affairs now invited him, made provisions against the consequences of that breach which impended between his kingdom and the apostolic see: He issued orders to his justiciaries, inhibiting, under severe penalties, all appeals to the pope or archbishop; forbidding any one to receive any mandates from them, or apply in any case to their authority; declaring it treasonable to bring from either of them an interdict upon the kingdom, and punishable in secular clergymen by the loss of their eyes and by castration, in regulars by

amputation of their feet, and in laics with death; and menacing with sequestration and banishment the persons themselves, as well as their kindred, who should pay obedience to any such interdict: and he farther obliged all his subjects to swear to the observance of those orders^u. These were edicts of the utmost importance, affected the lives and properties of all the subjects, and even changed, for the time, the national religion, by breaking off all communication with Rome: yet were they enacted by the sole authority of the king, and were derived entirely from his will and pleasure.

The spiritual powers, which, in the primitive church, were, in a great measure, dependant on the civil, had by a gradual progress reached an equality and independence; and though the limits of the two jurisdictions were difficult to ascertain or define, it was not impossible, but by moderation on both sides, government might still have been conducted in that imperfect and irregular manner which attends all human institutions. But as the ignorance of the age encouraged the ecclesiastics daily to extend their privileges, and even to advance maxims totally incompatible with civil government^x, Henry had thought it high time to put an end to their pretensions, and formally, in

^u Hist. Quad. p. 88, 167. Hoveden, p. 496. M. Paris, p. 73.

^x *Quis dubitet*, says Becket to the king, *sacerdotes Christi regum et principum omniumque fidelium patres et magistros censerì?* Epist. St. Thom. p. 97, 148.

a public council, to fix those powers which belonged to the magistrate, and which he was for the future determined to maintain. In this attempt he was led to re-establish customs, which, though ancient, were beginning to be abolished by a contrary practice, and which were still more strongly opposed by the prevailing opinions and sentiments of the age. Principle, therefore, stood on the one side, power on the other; and if the English had been actuated by conscience more than by present interest, the controversy must soon, by the general defection of Henry's subjects, have been decided against him. Becket, in order to forward this event, filled all places with exclamations against the violence which he had suffered. He compared himself to Christ, who had been condemned by a lay tribunal^y, and was crucified anew in the present oppressions under which his church laboured: he took it for granted, as a point incontestable, that his cause was the cause of God^z: he assumed the character of champion for the patrimony of the Divinity: he pretended to be the spiritual father of the king and all the people of England^a: he even told Henry, that kings reign solely by the authority of the church^b: and though he had thus torn off

^y Epist. St. Thom. p. 63, 105, 194. ^z Ibid. p. 29, 30, 31, 226.

^a Fitz-Steph. p. 46. Epist. St. Thom. p. 52, 143.

^b Brady's Append. N^o. 56. Epist. St. Thom. p. 94, 95, 97, 99, 197. Hoveden, p. 497.

the veil more openly on the one side, than that prince had on the other, he seemed still, from the general favour borne him by the ecclesiastics, to have all the advantage in the argument. The king, that he might employ the weapons of temporal power remaining in his hands, suspended the payment of Peter's-pence; he made advances towards an alliance with the emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, who was at that time engaged in violent wars with pope Alexander; he discovered some intentions of acknowledging Pascal III. the present anti-pope, who was protected by that emperor; and by these expedients he endeavoured to terrify the enterprising though prudent pontiff from proceeding to extremities against him.

But the violence of Becket, still more than the nature of the controversy, kept affairs from remaining long in suspense between the two parties. That prelate, instigated by revenge, and animated by the present glory attending his situation, pushed matters to a decision, and issued a censure, excommunicating the king's chief ministers by name, and comprehending in general all those who favoured or obeyed the constitutions of Clarendon: these constitutions he abrogated and annulled; he absolved all men from the oaths which they had taken to observe them; and he suspended the spiritual thunder over Henry him-

self, only that the prince might avoid the blow by a timely repentance^c.

The situation of Henry was so unhappy, that he could employ no expedient for saving his ministers from this terrible censure, but by appealing to the pope himself, and having recourse to a tribunal whose authority he had himself attempted to abridge in this very article of appeals, and which, he knew, was so deeply engaged on the side of his adversary. But even this expedient was not likely to be long effectual. Becket had obtained from the pope a legantine commission over England; and in virtue of that authority, which admitted of no appeal, he summoned the bishops of London, Salisbury, and others, to attend him, and ordered, under pain of excommunication, the ecclesiastics, sequestered on his account, to be restored in two months to all their benefices. But John of Oxford, the king's agent with the pope, had the address to procure orders for suspending this sentence; and he gave the pontiff such hopes of a speedy reconciliation between the king and Becket, that two legates, William of Pavia and Otho, were sent to Normandy, where the king then resided, and they endeavoured to find expedients for that purpose. But the pretensions of the parties were, as yet, too opposite to admit of an accommodation: the

^c Fitz-Steph. p. 56. Hist. Quad. p. 93. M. Paris, p. 74. Beaulieu, Vie de St. Thom. p. 213. Epist. St. Thom. p. 149, 229. Hoveden, p. 499.

king required, that all the constitutions of Clarendon should be ratified: Becket, that, previously to any agreement, he and his adherents should be restored to their possessions: and as the legates had no power to pronounce a definitive sentence on either side, the negotiation soon after came to nothing. The cardinal of Pavia also, being much attached to Henry, took care to protract the negotiation; to mitigate the pope, by the accounts which he sent of that prince's conduct; and to procure him every possible indulgence from the see of Rome. About this time the king had also the address to obtain a dispensation for the marriage of his third son Geoffrey, with the heiress of Brittany; a concession which, considering Henry's demerits towards the church, gave great scandal both to Becket, and to his zealous patron the king of France.

The intricacies of the feudal law had, in that age, rendered the boundaries of power between the prince and his vassals, and between one prince and another, as uncertain as those between the crown and the mitre; and all wars took their origin from disputes, which, had there been any tribunal possessed of power to enforce their decrees, ought to have been decided only before a court of judicature. Henry, in prosecution of some controversies, in which he was involved with the count of Auvergne, a vassal of the dutchy of Guienne, had invaded the territories of that nobleman; who had recourse to the king of France,

his superior lord, for protection, and thereby kindled a war between the two monarchs. But this war was, as usual, no less feeble in its operations, than it was frivolous in its cause and object; and after occasioning some mutual depredations^d, and some insurrections among the barons of Poictou and Guienne, was terminated by a peace. The terms of this peace were rather disadvantageous to Henry, and prove that that prince had, by reason of his contest with the church, lost the superiority which he had hitherto maintained over the crown of France: an additional motive to him for accommodating those differences.

The pope and the king began at last to perceive, that, in the present situation of affairs, neither of them could expect a final and decisive victory over the other; and that they had more to fear than to hope from the duration of the controversy. Though the vigour of Henry's government had confirmed his authority in all his dominions, his throne might be shaken by a sentence of excommunication; and if England itself could, by its situation, be more easily guarded against the contagion of superstitious prejudices, his French provinces at least, whose communication was open with the neighbouring states, would be much exposed, on that account, to some great

^d Hoveden, p. 517. M. Paris, p. 75. Diceto, p. 547. Ger-vase, p. 1402, 1403. Robert de Monte.

revolution or convulsion^e. He could not, therefore, reasonably imagine that the pope, while he retained such a check upon him, would formally recognise the constitutions of Clarendon, which both put an end to papal pretensions in England, and would give an example to other states of exerting a like independency^f. Pope Alexander, on the other hand, being still engaged in dangerous wars with the emperor Frederic, might justly apprehend, that Henry, rather than relinquish claims of such importance, would join the party of his enemy; and as the trials hitherto made of the spiritual weapons by Becket had not succeeded to his expectation, and every thing had remained quiet in all the king's dominions, nothing seemed impossible to the capacity and vigilance of so great a monarch. The disposition of minds on both sides, resulting from these circumstances, produced frequent attempts towards an accommodation; but as both parties knew that the essential articles of the dispute could not then be terminated, they entertained a perpetual jealousy of each other, and were anxious not to lose the least advantage in the negotiation. The nuncios, Gratian and Vivian, having received a commission to endeavour a reconciliation, met with the king in Normandy; and after all differences seemed to be adjusted, Henry offered to sign the treaty, with a salvo to his royal dignity;

^e Epist. St. Thom. p. 230.

^f Ibid. p. 276.

which gave such umbrage to Becket, that the negotiation, in the end, became fruitless, and the excommunications were renewed against the king's ministers. Another negotiation was conducted at Montmirail, in presence of the king of France, and the French prelates; where Becket also offered to make his submissions, with a salvo to the honour of God, and the liberties of the church; which, for a like reason, was extremely offensive to the king, and rendered the treaty abortive. A third conference, under the same mediation, was broken off, by Becket's insisting on a like reserve in his submissions; and even in a fourth treaty, when all the terms were adjusted, and when the primate expected to be introduced to the king, and to receive the kiss of peace, which it was usual for princes to grant in those times, and which was regarded as a sure pledge of forgiveness, Henry refused him that honour; under pretence, that, during his anger, he had made a rash vow to that purpose. This formality served, among such jealous spirits, to prevent the conclusion of the treaty; and though the difficulty was attempted to be overcome by a dispensation which the pope granted to Henry from his vow, that prince could not be prevailed on to depart from the resolution which he had taken.

In one of these conferences, at which the French king was present, Henry said to that monarch: "There have been many kings of England, some of greater, some of less authority

“ than myself: there have also been many arch-
“ bishops of Canterbury, holy and good men,
“ and entitled to every kind of respect: let
“ Becket but act towards me with the same sub-
“ mission which the greatest of his predecessors
“ have paid to the least of mine, and there shall
“ be no controversy between us.” Lewis was so
struck with this state of the case, and with an
offer which Henry made to submit his cause to the
French clergy, that he could not forbear con-
demning the primate, and withdrawing his friend-
ship from him during some time: but the bigot-
ry of that prince, and their common animosity
against Henry, soon produced a renewal of their
former good correspondence.

COMPROMISE WITH BECKET.

JULY 22.

ALL difficulties were at last adjusted between the parties; and the king allowed Becket to return, on conditions which may be esteemed both honourable and advantageous to that prelate. He was not required to give up any rights of the church, or resign any of those pretensions which had been the original ground of the controversy. It was agreed that all these questions should be buried in oblivion; but that Becket and his adherents should, without making further submission, be restored to all their livings; and that even the possessors of such benefices as depended on the

see of Canterbury, and had been filled during the primate's absence, should be expelled, and Becket have liberty to supply the vacancies^g. In return for concessions which entrenched so deeply on the honour and dignity of the crown, Henry reaped only the advantage of seeing his ministers absolved from the sentence of excommunication pronounced against them, and of preventing the interdict, which, if these hard conditions had not been complied with, was ready to be laid on all his dominions^h. It was easy to see how much he dreaded that event, when a prince of so high a spirit could submit to terms so dishonourable in order to prevent it. So anxious was Henry to accommodate all differences, and to reconcile himself fully with Becket, that he took the most extraordinary steps to flatter his vanity, and even, on one occasion, humiliated himself so far as to hold the stirrup of that haughty prelate while he mountedⁱ.

But the king attained not even that temporary tranquillity which he had hoped to reap from these expedients. During the heat of his quarrel with Becket, while he was every day expecting an interdict to be laid on his kingdom, and a sentence of excommunication to be fulminated against his person, he had thought it prudent to

^g Fitz-Steph. p. 68, 69. Hoveden, p. 520.

^h Hist. Quad. p. 104. Brompton, p. 1062. Gervase, p. 1408. Epist. St. Thom. p. 704, 705, 706, 707, 792, 793, 794. Benedict. Abbas, p. 70. ⁱ Epist. 45, lib. 5.

have his son, prince Henry, associated with him in the royalty, and to make him be crowned king by the hands of Roger archbishop of York. By this precaution he both ensured the succession of that prince, which, considering the many past irregularities in that point, could not but be esteemed somewhat precarious; and he preserved at least his family on the throne, if the sentence of excommunication should have the effect which he dreaded, and should make his subjects renounce their allegiance to him. Though this design was conducted with expedition and secrecy, Becket, before it was carried into execution, had got intelligence of it; and being desirous of obstructing all Henry's measures, as well as anxious to prevent this affront to himself, who pretended to the sole right, as archbishop of Canterbury, to officiate in the coronation, he had inhibited all the prelates of England from assisting at this ceremony, had procured from the pope a mandate to the same purpose^k, and had incited the king of France to protest against the coronation of young Henry, unless the princess, daughter of that monarch, should at the same time receive the royal unction. There prevailed in that age an opinion, which was a-kin to its other superstitions, that the royal unction was essential to the exercise of royal power^l: it was therefore natural both for the king of France, careful of his

^k Hist. Quad. p. 103. Epist. St. Thom. p. 682. Gervase, p. 1412.

^l Epist. St. Thom. p. 708.

daughter's establishment, and for Becket, jealous of his own dignity, to demand, in the treaty with Henry, some satisfaction in this essential point. Henry, after apologising to Lewis for the omission with regard to Margaret, and excusing it on account of the secrecy and dispatch requisite for conducting that measure, promised that the ceremony should be renewed in the persons both of the prince and princess: and he assured Becket, that besides receiving the acknowledgements of Roger and the other bishops for the seeming affront put on the see of Canterbury, the primate should, as a farther satisfaction, recover his rights by officiating in this coronation. But the violent spirit of Becket, elated by the power of the church, and by the victory which he had already obtained over his sovereign, was not content with this voluntary compensation, but resolved to make the injury, which he pretended to have suffered, a handle for taking revenge on all his enemies. On his arrival in England he met the archbishop of York, and the bishops of London and Salisbury, who were on their journey to the king in Normandy: he notified to the archbishop the sentence of suspension, and to the two bishops that of excommunication, which at his solicitation the pope had pronounced against them. Reginald de Warenne, and Gervase de Cornhill, two of the king's ministers who were employed on their duty in Kent, asked him, on hearing of

this bold attempt, whether he meant to bring fire and sword into the kingdom? But the primate, heedless of the reproof, proceeded, in the most ostentatious manner, to take possession of his diocese. In Rochester, and all the towns through which he passed, he was received with the shouts and acclamations of the populace. As he approached Southwark, the clergy, the laity, men of all ranks and ages, came forth to meet him, and celebrated with hymns of joy his triumphant entrance. And though he was obliged, by order of the young prince, who resided at Woodstoke, to return to his diocese, he found that he was not mistaken when he reckoned upon the highest veneration of the public towards his person and his dignity. He proceeded, therefore, with the more courage, to dart his spiritual thunders: he issued the sentence of excommunication against Robert de Broc and Nigel de Sackville, with many others, who either had assisted at the coronation of the prince, or been active in the late persecution of the exiled clergy. This violent measure, by which he in effect denounced war against the king himself, is commonly ascribed to the vindictive disposition and imperious character of Becket; but as this prelate was also a man of acknowledged abilities, we are not, in his passions alone, to look for the cause of his conduct, when he proceeded to these extremities against his enemies. His sagacity had led him to discover all

Henry's intentions; and he proposed, by this bold and unexpected assault, to prevent the execution of them.

The king, from his experience of the dispositions of his people, was become sensible that his enterprise had been too bold in establishing the constitutions of Clarendon, in defining all the branches of royal power, and in endeavouring to extort from the church of England, as well as from the pope, an express avowal of these disputed prerogatives. Conscious also of his own violence in attempting to break or subdue the inflexible primate, he was not displeased to undo that measure which had given his enemies such advantage against him; and he was contented that the controversy should terminate in that ambiguous manner, which was the utmost that princes in those ages could hope to attain in their disputes with the see of Rome. Though he dropped, for the present, the prosecution of Becket, he still reserved to himself the right of maintaining, that the constitutions of Clarendon, the original ground of the quarrel, were both the ancient customs and the present law of the realm: and though he knew that the papal clergy asserted them to be impious in themselves, as well as abrogated by the sentence of the sovereign pontiff, he intended, in spite of their clamours, steadily to put those laws in execution^m, and to trust to

^m Epist. St. Thom. p. 837, 839.

his own abilities, and to the course of events, for success in that perilous enterprise. He hoped that Becket's experience of a six years' exile would, after his pride was fully gratified by his restoration, be sufficient to teach him more reserve in his opposition; or if any controversy arose, he expected thenceforth to engage in a more favourable cause, and to maintain with advantage, while the primate was now in his powerⁿ, the ancient and undoubted customs of the kingdom against the usurpations of the clergy. But Becket determined not to betray the ecclesiastical privileges by his connivance^o, and apprehensive lest a prince of such profound policy, if allowed to proceed in his own way, might probably in the end prevail, resolved to take all the advantage which his present victory gave him, and to disconcert the cautious measures of the king, by the vehemence and rigour of his own conduct^p. Assured of support from Rome, he was little intimidated by dangers, which his courage taught him to despise, and which, even if attended with the most fatal consequences, would serve only to gratify his ambition and thirst of glory^q.

ⁿ Fitz-Steph. p. 65.

^o Epist. St. Thom. p. 345.

^p Fitz-Steph. p. 74.

^q Epist. St. Thom. p. 818, 848.

MURDER OF THOMAS A BECKET.

DECEMBER 29.

WHEN the suspended and excommunicated prelates arrived at Baieux, where the king then resided, and complained to him of the violent proceedings of Becket, he instantly perceived the consequences; was sensible that his whole plan of operations was overthrown; foresaw that the dangerous contest between the civil and spiritual powers, a contest which he himself had first roused, but which he had endeavoured, by all his late negotiations and concessions, to appease, must come to an immediate and decisive issue; and he was thence thrown into the most violent commotion. The archbishop of York remarked to him, that so long as Becket lived, he could never expect to enjoy peace or tranquillity: the king himself, being vehemently agitated, burst forth into an exclamation against his servants, whose want of zeal, he said, had so long left him exposed to the enterprises of that ungrateful and imperious prelate^r. Four gentlemen of his household, Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Traci, Hugh de Moreville, and Richard Brito, taking these passionate expressions to be a hint for Becket's death, immediately communicated their thoughts to each other; and swearing to avenge

^r Gervase, p. 1414. Parker, p. 207.

their prince's quarrel, secretly withdrew from court³. Some menacing expressions which they had dropped, gave a suspicion of their design; and the king dispatched a messenger after them, charging them to attempt nothing against the person of the primate⁴; but these orders arrived too late to prevent their fatal purpose. The four assassins, though they took different roads to England, arrived nearly about the same time at Saltwoode near Canterbury; and being there joined by some assistants, they proceeded in great haste to the archiepiscopal palace. They found the primate, who trusted entirely to the sacredness of his character, very slenderly attended; and though they threw out many menaces and reproaches against him, he was so incapable of fear, that, without using any precautions against their violence, he immediately went to St. Benedict's church to hear vespers. They followed him thither, attacked him before the altar, and having cloven his head with many blows, retired without meeting any opposition. This was the tragical end of Thomas a Becket, a prelate of the most lofty, intrepid, and inflexible spirit, who was able to cover to the world, and probably to himself, the enterprises of pride and ambition, under the disguise of sanctity, and of zeal for the interests of religion: an extraordinary

³ M. Paris, p. 86. Brompton, p. 1065. Benedict. Abbas, p. 10.

⁴ Hist. Quad. p. 144. Trivet, p. 55.

personage, surely, had he been allowed to remain in his first station, and had directed the vehemence of his character to the support of law and justice; instead of being engaged, by the prejudices of the times, to sacrifice all private duties and public connexions to ties which he imagined or represented as superior to every civil and political consideration. But no man who enters into the genius of that age can reasonably doubt of this prelate's sincerity. The spirit of superstition was so prevalent, that it infallibly caught every careless reasoner, much more every one whose interest, and honour, and ambition, were engaged to support it. All the wretched literature of the times was inlisted on that side: some faint glimmerings of common sense might sometimes pierce through the thick cloud of ignorance, or, what was worse, the illusions of perverted science, which had blotted out the sun, and enveloped the face of nature: but those who preserved themselves untainted by the general contagion, proceeded on no principles which they could pretend to justify: they were more indebted to their total want of instruction, than to their knowledge, if they still retained some share of understanding: folly was possessed of all the schools as well as all the churches; and her votaries assumed the garb of philosophers, together with the ensigns of spiritual dignities. Throughout that large collection of letters which bears the name of St. Thomas, we find, in all the retainers of that

aspiring prelate, no less than in himself, a most entire and absolute conviction of the reason and piety of their own party, and a disdain of their antagonists: nor is there less cant and grimace in their style, when they address each other, than when they compose manifestos for the perusal of the public. The spirit of revenge, violence, and ambition, which accompanied their conduct, instead of forming a presumption of hypocrisy, are the surest pledges of their sincere attachment to a cause, which so much flattered these domineering passions.

Henry, on the first report of Becket's violent measures, had purposed to have him arrested, and had already taken some steps towards the execution of that design: but the intelligence of his murder threw the prince into great consternation; and he was immediately sensible of the dangerous consequences which he had reason to apprehend from so unexpected an event. An archbishop of reputed sanctity assassinated before the altar, in the exercise of his functions, and on account of his zeal in maintaining ecclesiastical privileges, must attain the highest honours of martyrdom; while his murderer would be ranked among the most bloody tyrants that ever were exposed to the hatred and detestation of mankind. Interdicts and excommunications, weapons in themselves so terrible, would, he foresaw, be armed with double force, when employed in a cause so much calculated to work on the human passions, and so pe-

cularly adapted to the eloquence of popular preachers and declaimers. In vain would he plead his own innocence, and even his total ignorance of the fact: he was sufficiently guilty, if the church thought proper to esteem him such: and his concurrence in Becket's martyrdom, becoming a religious opinion, would be received with all the implicit credit which belonged to the most established articles of faith. These considerations gave the king the most unaffected concern; and as it was extremely his interest to clear himself from all suspicion, he took no care to conceal the depth of his affliction^u. He shut himself up from the light of day, and from all commerce with his servants: he even refused, during three days, all food and sustenance^w: the courtiers, apprehending dangerous effects from his despair, were at last obliged to break in upon his solitude; and they employed every topic of consolation, induced him to accept of nourishment, and occupied his leisure in taking precautions against the consequences which he so justly apprehended from the murder of the primate.

SUBMISSION OF THE KING, 1171.

THE point of chief importance to Henry was to convince the pope of his innocence; or rather, to

^u Ypod. Neust. p. 447. M. Paris, p. 87. Diceto, p. 556. Gervase, p. 1419. ^w Hist. Quad. p. 143.

persuade him that he would reap greater advantages from the submissions of England, than from proceeding to extremities against that kingdom. The archbishop of Rouen, the bishops of Worcester and Evreux, with five persons of inferior quality, were immediately dispatched to Rome^{*}, and orders were given them to perform their journey with the utmost expedition. Though the name and authority of the court of Rome were so terrible in the remote countries of Europe which were sunk in profound ignorance, and were entirely unacquainted with its character and conduct; the pope was so little revered at home, that his inveterate enemies surrounded the gates of Rome itself, and even controlled his government in that city; and the ambassadors who, from a distant extremity of Europe, carried to him the humble or rather abject submissions of the greatest potentate of the age, found the utmost difficulty to make their way to him, and to throw themselves at his feet. It was at length agreed that Richard Barre, one of their number, should leave the rest behind, and run all the hazards of the passage[†], in order to prevent the fatal consequences which might ensue from any delay in giving satisfaction to his holiness. He found, on his arrival, that Alexander was already wrought up to the greatest rage against the king; that Becket's partisans were daily stimulating him to

^{*} Hoveden, p. 526. M. Paris, p. 87.

[†] Hoveden, p. 526. Epist. St. Thom. p. 863.

revenge; that the king of France had exhorted him to fulminate the most dreadful sentence against England, and that the very mention of Henry's name before the sacred college was received with every expression of horror and execration. The Thursday before Easter was now approaching, when it is customary for the pope to denounce annual curses against all his enemies; and it was expected that Henry should, with all the preparations peculiar to the discharge of that sacred artillery, be solemnly comprehended in the number. But Barre found means to appease the pontiff, and to deter him from a measure which, if it failed of success, could not afterwards be easily recalled: the anathemas were only levelled in general against all the actors, accomplices, and abettors of Becket's murder. The abbot of Valasse, and the archdeacons of Salisbury and Lisieux, with others of Henry's ministers, who soon after arrived, besides asserting their prince's innocence, made oath before the whole consistory, that he would stand to the pope's judgment in the affair, and make every submission that should be required of him. The terrible blow was thus artfully eluded; the cardinals Albert and Theodin were appointed legates to examine the cause, and were ordered to proceed to Normandy for that purpose; and though Henry's foreign dominions were already laid under an interdict by the archbishop of Sens, Becket's great partisan, and the pope's legate in

France, the general expectation, that the monarch would easily exculpate himself from any concurrence in the guilt, kept every one in suspense, and prevented all the bad consequences which might be dreaded from that sentence.

The clergy, meanwhile, though their rage was happily diverted from falling on the king, were not idle in magnifying the sanctity of Becket ; in extolling the merits of his martyrdom ; and in exalting him above all that devoted tribe who in several ages had, by their blood, cemented the fabric of the temple. Other saints had only borne testimony by their sufferings to the general doctrines of christianity ; but Becket had sacrificed his life to the power and privileges of the clergy ; and this peculiar merit challenged, and not in vain, a suitable acknowledgment to his memory. Endless were the panegyrics on his virtues ; and the miracles wrought by his reliques were more numerous, more nonsensical, and more impudently attested, than those which ever filled the legend of any confessor or martyr. Two years after his death he was canonized by pope Alexander ; a solemn jubilee was established for celebrating his merits ; his body was removed to a magnificent shrine, enriched with presents from all parts of Christendom ; pilgrimages were performed to obtain his intercession with heaven ; and it was computed, that in one year above a hundred thousand pilgrims arrived in Canterbury, and paid their devotions at his tomb. It is indeed

a mortifying reflection to those who are actuated by the love of fame, so justly denominated the last infirmity of noble minds, that the wisest legislator, and most exalted genius that ever reformed or enlightened the world, can never expect such tributes of praise as are lavished on the memory of pretended saints, whose whole conduct was probably to the last degree odious or contemptible, and whose industry was entirely directed to the pursuit of objects pernicious to mankind. It is only a conqueror, a personage no less entitled to our hatred, who can pretend to the attainment of equal renown and glory.

It may not be amiss to remark, before we conclude the subject of Thomas a Becket, that the king, during his controversy with that prelate, was on every occasion more anxious than usual to express his zeal for religion, and to avoid all appearance of a profane negligence on that head. He gave his consent to the imposing of a tax on all his dominions for the delivery of the Holy Land, now threatened by the famous Saladine: this tax amounted to two-pence a pound for one year, and a penny a pound for the four subsequent². Almost all the princes of Europe laid a like imposition on their subjects, which received the name of Saladine's tax. During this period, there came over from Germany about thirty heretics of both sexes, under the direction of one Gerard; simple ignorant people, who could give no

² Chron. Gervase, p. 1399. M. Paris, p. 74.

account of their faith, but declared themselves ready to suffer for the tenets of their master. They made only one convert in England, a woman as ignorant as themselves; yet they gave such umbrage to the clergy, that they were delivered over to the secular arm, and were punished by being burned on the forehead, and then whipped through the streets. They seemed to exult in their sufferings, and as they went along, sung the beatitude, *Blessed are ye, when men hate you and persecute you*^a. After they were whipped, they were thrust out almost naked in the midst of winter, and perished through cold and hunger; no one daring or being willing to give them the least relief. We are ignorant of the particular tenets of these people: for it would be imprudent to rely on the representations left of them by the clergy, who affirm that they denied the efficacy of the sacraments, and the unity of the church. It is probable that their departure from the standard of orthodoxy was still more subtle and minute. They seem to have been the first that ever suffered for heresy in England.

As soon as Henry found that he was in no immediate danger from the thunders of the Vatican, he undertook an expedition against Ireland; a design which he had long projected, and by which he hoped to recover his credit, somewhat impaired by his late transactions with the hierarchy.

^a Neubr. p. 391. M. Paris, p. 74. Heming. p. 494.

CHAPTER IX.

State of Ireland Conquest of that Island The king's accommodation with the court of Rome Revolt of young Henry and his brothers Wars and insurrections War with Scotland Penance of Henry for Becket's murder William king of Scotland defeated and taken prisoner The king's accommodation with his sons The king's equitable administration Crusades Revolt of prince Richard Death and character of Henry Miscellaneous transactions of his reign.

STATE OF IRELAND. 1172.

As Britain was first peopled from Gaul, so was Ireland probably from Britain; and the inhabitants of all these countries seem to have been so many tribes of the Celtæ, who derive their origin from an antiquity that lies far beyond the records of any history or tradition. The Irish from the beginning of time had been buried in the most profound barbarism and ignorance; and as they were never conquered, or even invaded, by the Romans, from whom all the western world derived its civility, they continued still in the most rude state of society, and were distinguished by those vices alone to which human nature, not tamed by education, or restrained by laws, is forever subject. The small principalities into which

they were divided, exercised perpetual rapine and violence against each other; the uncertain succession of their princes was a continual source of domestic convulsions; the usual title of each petty sovereign was the murderer of his predecessor; courage and force, though exercised in the commission of crimes, were more honoured than any pacific virtues; and the most simple arts of life, even tillage and agriculture, were almost wholly unknown among them. They had felt the invasions of the Danes and the other northern tribes; but these inroads, which had spread barbarism in other parts of Europe, tended rather to improve the Irish; and the only towns which were to be found in the island, had been planted along the coast by the freebooters of Norway and Denmark. The other inhabitants exercised pasturage in the open country; sought protection from any danger in their forests and morasses; and being divided by the fiercest animosities against each other, were still more intent on the means of mutual injury, than on the expedients for common or even for private interest.

Besides many small tribes, there were in the age of Henry II. five principal sovereignties in the island, Munster, Leinster, Meath, Ulster, and Connaught; and as it had been usual for the one or the other of these to take the lead in their wars, there was commonly some prince, who seemed, for the time, to act as monarch of Ireland. Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, was then

advanced to this dignity^b; but his government, ill obeyed even within his own territory, could not unite the people in any measures either for the establishment of order, or for defence against foreigners. The ambition of Henry had, very early in his reign, been moved by the prospect of these advantages, to attempt the subjecting of Ireland; and a pretence was only wanting to invade a people who, being always confined to their own island, had never given any reason of complaint to any of their neighbours. For this purpose, he had recourse to Rome, which assumed a right to dispose of kingdoms and empires; and not foreseeing the dangerous disputes, which he was one day to maintain with that see, he helped, for present, or rather for an imaginary convenience, to give sanction to claims which were now become dangerous to all sovereigns. Adrian III. who then filled the papal chair, was by birth an Englishman; and being on that account the more disposed to oblige Henry, he was easily persuaded to act as master of the world, and to make, without any hazard or expence, the acquisition of a great island to his spiritual jurisdiction. The Irish had, by precedent missions from the Britons, been imperfectly converted to christianity; and, what the pope regarded as the surest mark of their imperfect conversion, they followed the doctrines of their first teachers, and had never

^b Hoveden, p. 527.

acknowledged any subjection to the see of Rome. Adrian, therefore, in the year 1156, issued a bull in favour of Henry ; in which, after premising that this prince had ever shewn an anxious care to enlarge the church of God on earth, and to increase the number of his saints and elect in heaven ; he represents his design of subduing Ireland as derived from the same pious motives : he considers his care of previously applying for the apostolic sanction as a sure earnest of success and victory ; and having established it as a point incontestable, that all christian kingdoms belong to the patrimony of St. Peter, he acknowledges it to be his own duty to sow among them the seeds of the gospel, which might in the last day fructify to their eternal salvation : he exhorts the king to invade Ireland, in order to extirpate the vice and wickedness of the natives, and oblige them to pay yearly, from every house, a penny to the see of Rome : he gives him entire right and authority over the island, commands all the inhabitants to obey him as their sovereign, and invests with full power all such godly instruments as he should think proper to employ in an enterprise thus calculated for the glory of God and the salvation of the souls of men^c. Henry, though armed with this authority, did not immediately put his design in execution ; but being detained

^c M. Paris, p. 67. Girald. Cambr. Spelm. Concil. vol. ii. p. 51.

Rymer, vol. i. p. 15.

by more interesting business on the continent, waited for a favourable opportunity of invading Ireland.

Dermot Macmorrogh, king of Leinster, had, by his licentious tyranny, rendered himself odious to his subjects, who seized with alacrity the first occasion that offered of throwing off the yoke, which was become grievous and oppressive to them. This prince had formed a design on Dovergilda, wife of Ororic prince of Breffny; and taking advantage of her husband's absence, who, being obliged to visit a distant part of his territory, had left his wife secure, as he thought, in an island surrounded by a bog; he suddenly invaded the place and carried off the princess^d. This exploit, though usual among the Irish, and rather deemed a proof of gallantry and spirit^e, provoked the resentment of the husband; who, having collected forces, and being strengthened by the alliance of Roderic king of Connaught, invaded the dominions of Dermot, and expelled him his kingdom. The exiled prince had recourse to Henry, who was at this time in Guienne, craved his assistance in restoring him to his sovereignty, and offered, on that event, to hold his kingdom in vassalage under the crown of England. Henry, whose views were already turned towards making acquisitions in Ireland, readily accepted the offer; but being at that time embarrassed by the re-

^d Girald. Cambr. p. 760.

^e Spencer, vol. vi.

bellions of his French subjects, as well as by his disputes with the see of Rome, he declined for the present embarking in the enterprise, and gave Dermot no farther assistance than letters patent, by which he empowered all his subjects to aid the Irish prince in the recovery of his dominions^f. Dermot, supported by his authority, came to Bristol; and after endeavouring, though for some time in vain, to engage adventurers in the enterprise, he at last formed a treaty with Richard, surnamed Strongbow, earl of Strigul. This nobleman, who was of the illustrious house of Clare, had impaired his fortune by expensive pleasures; and being ready for any desperate undertaking, he promised assistance to Dermot, on condition that he should espouse Eva daughter of that prince, and be declared heir to all his dominions^g. While Richard was assembling his succours, Dermot went into Wales; and meeting with Robert Fitz-Stephens, constable of Abertivi, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald, he also engaged them in his service, and obtained their promise of invading Ireland. Being now assured of succour, he returned privately to his own state; and lurking in the monastery of Fernez, which he had founded (for this ruffian was also a founder of monasteries), he prepared every thing for the reception of his English allies^h.

^f Girald. Camb. p. 760.^g Ibid. p. 761.^h Ibid. p. 761.

CONQUEST OF THAT ISLAND. 1172.

THE troops of Fitz-Stephens were first ready. That gentleman landed in Ireland with thirty knights, sixty esquires, and three hundred archers: but this small body, being brave men, not unacquainted with discipline, and completely armed, a thing almost unknown in Ireland, struck a great terror into the barbarous inhabitants, and seemed to menace them with some signal revolution. The conjunction of Maurice de Pendergast, who, about the same time, brought over ten knights and sixty archers, enabled Fitz-Stephens to attempt the siege of Wexford, a town inhabited by the Danes; and after gaining an advantage, he made himself master of the placeⁱ. Soon after, Fitz-Gerald arrived with ten knights, thirty esquires, and a hundred archers^k; and being joined by the former adventurers, composed a force which nothing in Ireland was able to withstand. Roderic, the chief monarch of the island, was foiled in different actions; the prince of Ossory was obliged to submit, and give hostages for his peaceable behaviour; and Dermot, not content with being restored to his kingdom of Leinster, projected the dethroning of Roderic, and aspired to the sole dominion over the Irish.

In prosecution of these views, he sent over a

ⁱ Girald. Cambr. p. 761, 762.

^k Ibid. p. 766

messenger to the earl of Strigul, challenging the performance of his promise, and displaying the mighty advantages which might now be reaped by a reinforcement of warlike troops from England. Richard, not satisfied with the general allowance given by Henry to all his subjects, went to that prince, then in Normandy; and having obtained a cold or ambiguous permission, prepared himself for the execution of his designs. He first sent over Raymond, one of his retinue, with ten knights and seventy archers, who, landing near Waterford, defeated a body of three thousand Irish that had ventured to attack him¹; and as Richard himself, who brought over two hundred horse, and a body of archers, joined, a few days after, the victorious English, they made themselves masters of Waterford, and proceeded to Dublin, which was taken by assault. Roderic, in revenge, cut off the head of Dermot's natural son, who had been left as a hostage in his hands; and Richard, marrying Eva, became soon after, by the death of Dermot, master of the kingdom of Leinster, and prepared to extend his authority over all Ireland. Roderic and the other Irish princes were alarmed at the danger; and combining together, besieged Dublin with an army of thirty thousand men: but earl Richard, making a sudden sally at the head of ninety knights, with their followers, put this numerous army to

¹Girald. Cambr. p. 767.

rout, chased them off the field, and pursued them with great slaughter. None in Ireland now dared to oppose themselves to the English^m.

Henry, jealous of the progress made by his own subjects, sent orders to recal all the English, and he made preparations to attack Ireland in personⁿ: but Richard, and the other adventurers, found means to appease him, by making him the most humble submissions, and offering to hold all their acquisitions in vassalage to his crown^o. That monarch landed in Ireland at the head of five hundred knights, besides other soldiers: he found the Irish so dispirited by their late misfortunes, that, in a progress which he made through the island, he had no other occupation than to receive the homage of his new subjects. He left most of the Irish chieftains or princes in possession of their ancient territories; bestowed some lands on the English adventurers; gave earl Richard the commission of seneschal of Ireland; and after a stay of a few months, returned in triumph to England. By these trivial exploits, scarcely worth relating, except for the importance of the consequences, was Ireland subdued, and annexed to the English crown.

The low state of commerce and industry during those ages made it impracticable for princes to support regular armies, which might retain a conquered country in subjection; and the extreme

^m Girald. Cambr. p. 773.

ⁿ Ibid. p. 770.

^o Ibid. p. 775.

barbarism and poverty of Ireland could still less afford means of bearing the expence. The only expedient, by which a durable conquest could then be made or maintained, was by pouring in a multitude of new inhabitants, dividing among them the lands of the vanquished, establishing them in all offices of trust and authority, and thereby transforming the ancient inhabitants into a new people. By this policy, the northern invaders of old, and of late the duke of Normandy, had been able to fix their dominion, and to erect kingdoms, which remained stable on their foundations, and were transmitted to the posterity of the first conquerors. But the state of Ireland rendered that island so little inviting to the English, that only a few of desperate fortunes could be persuaded, from time to time, to transport themselves thither^P; and instead of reclaiming the natives from their uncultivated manners, they were gradually assimilated to the ancient inhabitants, and degenerated from the customs of their own nation. It was also found requisite to bestow great military and arbitrary powers on the leaders, who commanded a handful of men amidst such hostile multitudes; and law and equity, in a little time, became as much unknown in the English settlements, as they had ever been among the Irish tribes. Palatinates were erected in favour of the new adventurers; independent authority conferred; the natives, never fully subdued, still retained their

^P Brompton, p. 1069. Neubrig. p. 403.

animosity against the conquerors; their hatred was retaliated by like injuries; and from these causes, the Irish, during the course of four centuries, remained still savage and untractable: it was not till the latter end of Elizabeth's reign, that the island was fully subdued; nor till that of her successor, that it gave hopes of becoming a useful conquest of the English nation.

THE KING'S ACCOMMODATION WITH THE COURT OF ROME.

BESIDES that the easy and peaceable submission of the Irish left Henry no farther occupation in that island, he was recalled from it by another incident, which was of the last importance to his interest and safety. The two legates Albert and Theodin, to whom was committed the trial of his conduct in the murder of archbishop Becket, were arrived in Normandy; and being impatient of delay, sent him frequent letters, full of menaces, if he protracted any longer making his appearance before them^a. He hastened therefore to Normandy, and had a conference with them at Savigny, where their demands were so exorbitant, that he broke off the negotiation, threatened to return to Ireland, and bade them do their worst against him. They perceived that the season was now past for taking advantage of that tragical

^a Girald. Camb. p. 778.

incident; which, had it been hotly pursued by interdicts and excommunications, was capable of throwing the whole kingdom into combustion. But the time which Henry had happily gained had contributed to appease the minds of men: the event could not now have the same influence as when it was recent; and as the clergy every day looked for an accommodation with the king, they had not opposed the pretensions of his partisans, who had been very industrious in representing to the people his entire innocence in the murder of the primate, and his ignorance of the designs formed by the assassins. The legates, therefore, found themselves obliged to lower their terms; and Henry was so fortunate as to conclude an accommodation with them. He declared upon oath, before the reliques of the saints, that, so far from commanding or desiring the death of the archbishop, he was extremely grieved when he received intelligence of it: but as the passion, which he had expressed on account of that prelate's conduct, had probably been the occasion of his murder, he stipulated the following conditions, as an atonement for the offence. He promised, that he should pardon all such as had been banished for adhering to Becket, and should restore them to their livings; that the see of Canterbury should be reinstated in all its ancient possessions; that he should pay the templars a sum of money for the subsistence of two hundred knights during a year in the Holy Land; that he should himself

take the cross at the Christmas following, and, if the pope required it, serve three years against the infidels either in Spain or Palestine ; that he should not insist on the observance of such customs, derogatory to ecclesiastical privileges, as had been introduced in his own time ; and that he should not obstruct appeals to the pope in ecclesiastical causes, but should content himself with exacting sufficient security from such clergymen as left his dominions to prosecute an appeal, that they should attempt nothing against the rights of his crown^r. Upon signing these concessions, Henry received absolution from the legates, and was confirmed in the grant of Ireland made by pope Adrian^s; and nothing proves more strongly the great abilities of this monarch, than his extricating himself on such easy terms, from so difficult a situation. He had always insisted, that the laws established at Clarendon contained not any new claims, but the ancient customs of the kingdom ; and he was still at liberty, notwithstanding the articles of this agreement, to maintain his pretensions. Appeals to the pope were indeed permitted by that treaty ; but as the king was also permitted to exact reasonable securities from the parties, and might stretch his demands on this head as far as he pleased, he had it virtually in his power to prevent the pope from reaping any ad-

^r M. Paris, p. 88. Benedict. Abb. p. 34. Hoveden, p. 529. Diceto, p. 560. Chron. Gerv. p. 1422.

^s Brompton, p. 1071. Liber Nig. Scac. p. 47.

vantage by this seeming concession. And on the whole, the constitutions of Clarendon remained still the law of the realm : though the pope and his legates seem so little to have conceived the king's power to lie under any legal limitations, that they were satisfied with his departing, by treaty, from one of the most momentous articles of these constitutions, without requiring any repeal by the states of the kingdom.

Henry, freed from this dangerous controversy with the ecclesiastics, and with the see of Rome, seemed now to have reached the pinnacle of human grandeur and felicity, and to be equally happy in his domestic situation and in his political government. A numerous progeny of sons and daughters gave both lustre and authority to his crown, prevented the dangers of a disputed succession, and repressed all pretensions of the ambitious barons. The king's precaution also, in establishing the several branches of his family, seemed well calculated to prevent all jealousy among the brothers, and to perpetuate the greatness of his family. He had appointed Henry, his eldest son, to be his successor in the kingdom of England, the duchy of Normandy, and the counties of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine ; territories which lay contiguous, and which, by that means, might easily lend to each other mutual assistance both against intestine commotions and foreign invasions. Richard, his second son, was invested in the dutchy of Guienne and county of Poictou ;

Geoffrey, his third son, inherited, in right of his wife, the dutchy of Brittany; and the new conquest of Ireland was destined for the appanage of John, his fourth son. He had also negotiated, in favour of this last prince, a marriage with Adalais, the only daughter of Humbert count of Savoy and Maurienne; and was to receive as her dowry considerable demesnes in Piedmont, Savoy, Bresse, and Dauphiny^t. But this exaltation of his family excited the jealousy of all his neighbours, who made those very sons, whose fortunes he had so anxiously established, the means of embittering his future life, and disturbing his government.

Young Henry, who was rising to man's estate, began to display his character, and aspire to independence: brave, ambitious, liberal, munificent, affable; he discovered qualities which gave great lustre to youth; prognosticate a shining fortune; but, unless tempered in mature age with discretion, are the forerunner of the greatest calamities^u. It is said, that at the time when this prince received the royal unction, his father, in order to give greater dignity to the ceremony, officiated at table as one of the retinue; and observed to his son, that never king was more royally served. *It is nothing extraordinary*, said young Henry to one of his courtiers, *if the son of*

^t Ypod. Neust. p. 448. Bened. Abb. p. 38. Hoveden, p. 532. Diceto, p. 562. Brompton, p. 1081. Rymer, vol. i. p. 33.

^u Chron. Gerv. p. 1463.

a count should serve the son of a king. This saying, which might pass only for an innocent pleasantry, or even for an oblique compliment to his father, was however regarded as a symptom of his aspiring temper ; and his conduct soon after justified the conjecture.

REVOLT OF YOUNG HENRY AND HIS BROTHERS. 1173.

HENRY, agreeably to the promise which he had given both to the pope and French king, permitted his son to be crowned anew by the hands of the archbishop of Roüen, and associated the princess Margaret, spouse to young Henry, in the ceremony^x. He afterwards allowed him to pay a visit to his father-in-law at Paris, who took the opportunity of instilling into the young prince those ambitious sentiments to which he was naturally but too much inclined^y. Though it had been the constant practice of France, ever since the accession of the Capetian line, to crown the son during the lifetime of the father, without conferring on him any present participation of royalty ; Lewis persuaded his son-in-law, that, by

^x Hoveden, p. 529. Diceto, p. 560. Brompton, p. 1080. Chron. Gervas. p. 1421. Trivet, p. 58. It appears from Madox's History of the Exchequer, that silk garments were then known in England, and that the coronation robes of the young king and queen cost eighty-seven pounds ten shillings and fourpence, money of that age. ^y Girald. Cambr. p. 782.

this ceremony, which in those ages was deemed so important, he had acquired a title to sovereignty, and that the king could not, without injustice, exclude him from immediate possession of the whole, or at least a part of his dominions. In consequence of these extravagant ideas, young Henry, on his return, desired the king to resign to him either the crown of England, or the dutchy of Normandy ; discovered great discontent on the refusal ; spake in the most undutiful terms of his father ; and soon after, in concert with Lewis, made his escape to Paris, where he was protected and supported by that monarch.

While Henry was alarmed at this incident, and had the prospect of dangerous intrigues, or even of a war, which, whether successful or not, must be extremely calamitous and disagreeable to him, he received intelligence of new misfortunes, which must have affected him in the most sensible manner. Queen Eleanor, who had disgusted her first husband by her gallantries, was no less offensive to her second by her jealousy ; and after this manner carried to extremity, in the different periods of her life, every circumstance of female weakness. She communicated her discontents against Henry to her two younger sons, Geoffrey and Richard ; persuaded them that they were also entitled to present possession of the territories assigned to them ; engaged them to fly secretly to the court of France ; and was meditating, herself, an escape to the same court, and had even

put on man's apparel for that purpose ; when she was seized by orders from her husband, and thrown into confinement. Thus Europe saw with astonishment the best and most indulgent of parents at war with his whole family ; three boys, scarcely arrived at the age of puberty, required a great monarch, in the full vigour of his age and height of his reputation, to dethrone himself in their favour ; and several princes not ashamed to support them in these unnatural and absurd pretensions.

Henry, reduced to this perilous and disagreeable situation, had recourse to the court of Rome : though sensible of the danger attending the interposition of ecclesiastical authority in temporal disputes, he applied to the pope, as his superior lord, to excommunicate his enemies, and by these censures to reduce to obedience his undutiful children, whom he found such reluctance to punish by the sword of the magistrate². Alexander, well pleased to exert his power in so justifiable a cause, issued the bulls required of him : but it was soon found, that these spiritual weapons had not the same force as when employed in a spiritual controversy ; and that the clergy were very negligent in supporting a sentence, which was nowise cal-

² Epist. Petri Bles. epist. 136. in Biblioth. Patr. tom. xxiv. p. 1048. His words are, *Vestræ jurisdictionis est regnum Angliæ, et quantum ad feudatorii juris obligationem, vobis duntaxat obnoxius teneor*. The same strange paper is in Rymer, vol. i. p. 35. and Trivet, vol. i. p. 62.

culated to promote the immediate interests of their order. The king, after taking in vain this humiliating step, was obliged to have recourse to arms, and to enlist such auxiliaries, as are the usual resource of tyrants, and have seldom been employed by so wise and just a monarch.

The loose government which prevailed in all the states of Europe, the many private wars carried on among the neighbouring nobles, and the impossibility of enforcing any general execution of the laws, had encouraged a tribe of banditti to disturb every where the public peace, to infest the highways, to pillage the open country, and to brave all the efforts of the civil magistrate, and even the excommunications of the church, which were fulminated against them^a. Troops of them were sometimes enlisted in the service of one prince or baron, sometimes in that of another: they often acted in an independent manner, under leaders of their own: the peaceable and industrious inhabitants, reduced to poverty by their ravages, were frequently obliged, for subsistence, to betake themselves to a like disorderly course of life: and a continual intestine war, pernicious to industry, as well as to the execution of justice, was thus carried on in the bowels of every kingdom^b. Those desperate ruffians received the name sometimes of Brabançons, sometimes of Routiers or Cottreaux; but for what reason is

^a Neubrig. p. 413.

^b Chron. Gerv. p. 1461.

not agreed by historians : and they formed a kind of society or government among themselves, which set at defiance the rest of mankind. The greatest monarchs were not ashamed, on occasion, to have recourse to their assistance ; and as their habits of war and depredation had given them experience, hardiness, and courage, they generally composed the most formidable part of those armies, which decided the political quarrels of princes. Several of them were enlisted among the forces levied by Henry's enemies^c ; but the great treasures amassed by that prince enabled him to engage more numerous troops of them in his service ; and the situation of his affairs rendered even such banditti the only forces on whose fidelity he could repose any confidence. His licentious barons, disgusted with a vigilant government, were more desirous of being ruled by young princes, ignorant of public affairs, remiss in their conduct, and profuse in their grants^d ; and as the king had ensured to his sons the succession to every particular province of his dominions, the nobles dreaded no danger in adhering to those who, they knew, must sometime become their sovereigns. Prompted by these motives, many of the Norman nobility had deserted to his son Henry ; the Breton and Gascon barons seemed equally disposed to embrace the quarrel of Geoffrey and Richard. Disaffection had crept in among the English ;

^c Petr. Bles. epist. 47.

^d Diceto, p. 570.

and the earls of Leicester and Chester in particular had openly declared against the king. Twenty thousand Brabançons, therefore, joined to some troops which he brought over from Ireland, and a few barons of approved fidelity, formed the sole force with which he intended to resist his enemies.

Lewis, in order to bind the confederates in a closer union, summoned at Paris an assembly of the chief vassals of the crown, received their approbation of his measures, and engaged them by oath to adhere to the cause of young Henry. This prince, in return, bound himself by a like tie never to desert his French allies ; and having made a new great seal, he lavishly distributed among them many considerable parts of those territories which he purposed to conquer from his father. The counts of Flanders, Boulogne, Blois, and Eu, partly moved by the general jealousy arising from Henry's power and ambition, partly allured by the prospect of reaping advantage from the inconsiderate temper and the necessities of the young prince, declared openly in favour of the latter. William, king of Scotland, had also entered into this great confederacy ; and a plan was concerted for a general invasion on different parts of the king's extensive and factious dominions.

Hostilities were first commenced by the counts of Flanders and Boulogne on the frontiers of Normandy. Those princes laid siege to Aumale, which was delivered into their hands by the trea-

chery of the count of that name : this nobleman surrendered himself prisoner ; and, on pretence of thereby paying his ransom, opened the gates of all his other fortresses. The two counts next besieged and made themselves masters of Drincourt : but the count of Boulogne was here mortally wounded in the assault ; and this incident put some stop to the progress of the Flemish arms.

WARS AND INSURRECTIONS. 1173.

IN another quarter, the king of France, being strongly assisted by his vassals, assembled a great army of seven thousand knights and their followers on horseback, and a proportionable number of infantry : carrying young Henry along with him, he laid siege to Verneuil, which was vigorously defended by Hugh de Lacy and Hugh de Beauchamp, the governors. After he had lain a month before the place, the garrison, being straitened for provisions, were obliged to capitulate ; and they engaged, if not relieved within three days, to surrender the town, and to retire into the citadel. On the last of these days, Henry appeared with his army upon the heights above Verneuil. Lewis, dreading an attack, sent the archbishop of Sens and the count of Blois to the English camp, and desired that next day should be appointed for a conference, in order to establish a general peace, and terminate the difference between Henry and

his sons. The king, who passionately desired this accommodation, and suspected no fraud, gave his consent ; but Lewis, that morning, obliging the garrison to surrender, according to the capitulation, set fire to the place, and began to retire with his army. Henry provoked at this artifice, attacked the rear with vigour, put them to rout, did some execution, and took several prisoners. The French army, as their time of service was now expired, immediately dispersed themselves into their several provinces ; and left Henry free to prosecute his advantages against his other enemies.

The nobles of Brittany, instigated by the earl of Chester and Ralph de Fourgeres, were all in arms ; but their progress was checked by a body of Brabançons, which the king, after Lewis's retreat, had sent against them. The two armies came to an action near Dol ; where the rebels were defeated, fifteen hundred killed on the spot, and the leaders, the earls of Chester and Fourgeres, obliged to take shelter in the town of Dol. Henry hastened to form the siege of that place, and carried on the attack with such ardour, that he obliged the governor and garrison to surrender themselves prisoners. By these vigorous measures and happy successes, the insurrections were entirely quelled in Brittany ; and the king, thus fortunate in all quarters, willingly agreed to a conference with Lewis, in hopes that his enemies, finding all their mighty efforts entirely frustrated, would ter-

minate hostilities on some moderate and reasonable conditions.

The two monarchs met between Trie and Gisors; and Henry had here the mortification to see his three sons in the retinue of his mortal enemy. As Lewis had no other pretence for war than supporting the claims of the young princes, the king made them such offers as children might be ashamed to insist on, and could be extorted from him by nothing but his parental affection, or by the present necessity of his affairs^e. He insisted only on retaining the sovereign authority in all his dominions; but offered young Henry half the revenues of England, with some places of surety in that kingdom; or, if he rather chose to reside in Normandy, half the revenues of that dutchy, with all those of Anjou. He made a like offer to Richard in Guienne; he promised to resign Brittany to Geoffrey; and if these concessions were not deemed sufficient, he agreed to add to them whatever the pope's legates, who were present, should require of him^f. The earl of Leicester was also present at the negotiation; and either from the impetuosity of his temper, or from a view of abruptly breaking off a conference which must cover the allies with confusion, he gave vent to the most violent reproaches against Henry, and he even put his hand to his sword, as if he meant

^e Hoveden, p. 539.

^f Ibid. p. 536. Brompton, p. 1088.

to attempt some violence against him. This furious action threw the whole company into confusion, and put an end to the treaty^g.

The chief hopes of Henry's enemies seemed now to depend on the state of affairs in England, where his authority was exposed to the most imminent danger. One article of prince Henry's agreement with his foreign confederates was, that he should resign Kent, with Dover, and all its other fortresses, into the hands of the earl of Flanders^h: yet so little national or public spirit prevailed among the independent English nobility, so wholly bent were they on the aggrandizement each of himself and his own family, that, notwithstanding this pernicious concession, which must have produced the ruin of the kingdom, the greater part of them had conspired to make an insurrection, and to support the prince's pretensions. The king's principal resource lay in the church and the bishops, with whom he was now in perfect agreement; whether that the decency of their character made them ashamed of supporting so unnatural a rebellion, or that they were entirely satisfied with Henry's atonement for the murder of Becket, and for his former invasion of ecclesiastical immunities. That prince, however, had resigned none of the essential rights of his crown in the accommodation; he maintained still the same prudent jealousy of the court of Rome;

^g Hoveden, p. 536.

^h Ibid. p. 533. Brompton, p. 1084. Neub. p. 508.

admitted no legate into England, without his swearing to attempt nothing against the royal prerogatives; and he had even obliged the monks of Canterbury, who pretended to a free election on the vacancy made by the death of Becket, to chuse Roger, prior of Dover, in the place of that turbulent prelateⁱ.

WAR WITH SCOTLAND. 1173.

THE king of Scotland made an irruption into Northumberland, and committed great devastations; but being opposed by Richard de Lucy, whom Henry had left guardian of the realm, he retreated into his own country, and agreed to a cessation of arms. This truce enabled the guardian to march southward with his army, in order to oppose an invasion, which the earl of Leicester, at the head of a great body of Flemings, had made upon Suffolk. The Flemings had been joined by Hugh Bigod, who made them masters of his castle of Framlingham; and marching into the heart of the kingdom, where they hoped to be supported by Leicester's vassals, they were met by Lucy, who, assisted by Humphry Bohun, the constable, and the earls of Arundel, Gloucester, and Cornwall, had advanced to Farnham, with a less numerous, but braver army, to oppose them. The Flemings, who were mostly weavers and ar-

ⁱ Hoveden, p. 537.

tificers (for manufactures were now beginning to be established in Flanders), were broken in an instant, ten thousand of them were put to the sword, the earl of Leicester was taken prisoner, and the remains of the invaders were glad to compound for a safe retreat into their own country.

PENANCE OF HENRY FOR BECKET'S MURDER. JULY 8, 1174.

THIS great defeat did not dishearten the malcontents; who, being supported by the alliance of so many foreign princes, and encouraged by the king's own sons, determined to persevere in their enterprise. The earl of Ferrars, Roger de Moubay, Architel de Mallory, Richard de Morreville, Hamo de Mascie, together with many friends of the earls of Leicester and Chester, rose in arms: the fidelity of the earls of Clare and Gloucester was suspected; and the guardian, though vigorously supported by Geoffrey bishop of Lincoln, the king's natural son by the fair Rosamond, found it difficult to defend himself on all quarters, from so many open and concealed enemies. The more to augment the confusion, the king of Scotland, on the expiration of the truce, broke into the northern provinces with a great army^k of 80,000 men; which, though undisciplined and disorderly, and better fitted for con-

^k Heming. p. 501.

mitting devastation, than for executing any military enterprise, was become dangerous from the present factious and turbulent spirit of the kingdom. Henry, who had baffled all his enemies in France, and had put his frontiers in a posture of defence, now found England the seat of danger; and he determined by his presence to overawe the malcontents, or by his conduct and courage to subdue them. He landed at Southampton; and knowing the influence of superstition over the minds of the people, he hastened to Canterbury, in order to make atonement to the ashes of Thomas a Becket, and tender his submissions to a dead enemy. As soon as he came within sight of the church of Canterbury, he dismounted, walked barefoot towards it, prostrated himself before the shrine of the saint, remained in fasting and prayer during a whole day, and watched all night the holy reliques. Not content with this hypocritical devotion towards a man, whose violence and ingratitude had so long disquieted his government, and had been the object of his most inveterate animosity, he submitted to a penance still more singular and humiliating. He assembled a chapter of the monks, disrobed himself before them, put a scourge of discipline into the hands of each, and presented his bare shoulders to the lashes which these ecclesiastics successively inflicted upon him. Next day he received absolution; and departing for London, got soon after the agreeable intelligence of a great victory which

his generals had obtained over the Scots, and which being gained, as was reported, on the very day of his absolution, was regarded as the earnest of his final reconciliation with Heaven and with Thomas a Becket.

WILLIAM KING OF SCOTLAND DEFEATED AND TAKEN PRISONER. JULY 13.

WILLIAM king of Scots, though repulsed before the castle of Prudhow, and other fortified places, had committed the most horrible depredations upon the northern provinces: But on the approach of Ralph de Glanville, the famous justiciary, seconded by Barnard de Baliol, Robert de Stuteville, Odonel de Umfreville, William de Vesci, and other northern barons, together with the gallant bishop of Lincoln, he thought proper to retreat nearer his own country, and he fixed his camp at Alnwic. He had here weakened his army extremely, by sending out numerous detachments in order to extend his ravages; and he lay absolutely safe, as he imagined, from any attack of the enemy. But Glanville, informed of his situation, made a hasty and fatiguing march to Newcastle; and allowing his soldiers only a small interval for refreshment, he immediately set out towards evening for Alnwic. He marched that night above thirty miles; arrived in the morning, under cover of a mist, near the Scottish camp; and regardless of the great numbers of

the enemy, he began the attack with his small but determined body of cavalry. William was living in such supine security, that he took the English, at first, for a body of his own ravagers, who were returning to the camp: but the sight of their banners convincing him of his mistake, he entered on the action with no greater body than a hundred horse, in confidence that the numerous army which surrounded him would soon hasten to his relief. He was dismounted on the first shock, and taken prisoner; while his troops, hearing of this disaster, fled on all sides with the utmost precipitation. The dispersed ravagers made the best of their way to their own country; and discord arising among them, they proceeded even to mutual hostilities, and suffered more from each other's sword, than from that of the enemy.

This great and important victory proved at last decisive in favour of Henry, and entirely broke the spirit of the English rebels. The bishop of Durham, who was preparing to revolt, made his submissions; Hugh Bigod, though he had received a strong reinforcement of Flemings, was obliged to surrender all his castles, and throw himself on the king's mercy; no better resource was left to the earl of Ferrars and Roger de Moubray; the inferior rebels imitating the example, all England was restored to tranquillity in a few weeks; and as the king appeared to lie under the immediate protection of Heaven, it was

deemed impious any longer to resist him. The clergy exalted anew the merits and powerful intercession of Becket; and Henry, instead of opposing this superstition, plumed himself on the new friendship of the saint, and propagated an opinion which was so favourable to his interests¹.

Prince Henry, who was ready to embark at Gravelines, with the earl of Flanders and a great army, hearing that his partisans in England were suppressed, abandoned all thoughts of the enterprise, and joined the camp of Lewis, who, during the absence of the king, had made an irruption into Normandy, and had laid siege to Rouën^m. The place was defended with great vigour by the inhabitantsⁿ; and Lewis, despairing of success by open force, tried to gain the town by a stratagem, which, in that superstitious age, was deemed not very honourable. He proclaimed in his own camp a cessation of arms, on pretence of celebrating the festival of St. Laurence; and when the citizens, supposing themselves in safety, were so imprudent as to remit their guard, he purposed to take advantage of their security. Happily, some priests had, from mere curiosity, mounted a steeple, where the alarm-bell hung; and observing the French camp in motion, they immediately rang the bell, and gave warning to the inhabitants, who ran to their several stations. The

¹ Hoveden, p. 539.

^m Brompton, p. 1096.

ⁿ Diceto, p. 578.

French, who, on hearing the alarm, hurried to the assault, had already mounted the walls in several places ; but being repulsed by the enraged citizens, were obliged to retreat with considerable loss°. Next day Henry, who had hastened to the defence of his Norman dominions, passed over the bridge in triumph ; and entered Roüen in sight of the French army. The city was now in absolute safety ; and the king, in order to brave the French monarch, commanded the gates, which had been walled up, to be opened ; and he prepared to push his advantages against the enemy. Lewis saved himself from this perilous situation by a new piece of deceit not so justifiable. He proposed a conference for adjusting the terms of a general peace, which he knew would be greedily embraced by Henry ; and while the king of England trusted to the execution of his promise, he made a retreat with his army into France.

There was, however, a necessity on both sides for an accommodation. Henry could no longer bear to see his three sons in the hands of his enemy ; and Lewis dreaded, lest this great monarch, victorious in all quarters, crowned with glory, and absolute master of his dominions, might take revenge for the many dangers and disquietudes which the arms, and still more the intrigues of France, had, in his disputes both with Becket and his sons, found means to raise him. After

° Brompton, p. 1096. Neubrig. p. 411. Heming. p. 503.

making a cessation of arms, a conference was agreed on near Tours; where Henry granted his sons much less advantageous terms than he had formerly offered; and he received their submissions. The most material of his concessions were some pensions which he stipulated to pay them, and some castles which he granted them for the place of their residence; together with an indemnity for all their adherents, who were restored to their estates and honours^p.

Of all those who had embraced the cause of the young prince, William king of Scotland was the only considerable loser by that invidious and unjust enterprise. Henry delivered from confinement, without exacting any ransom, about nine hundred knights whom he had taken prisoners; but it cost William the ancient independency of his crown as the price of his liberty. He stipulated to do homage to Henry for Scotland and all his other possessions; he engaged that all the barons and nobility of his kingdom should also do homage; that the bishops should take an oath of fealty; that both should swear to adhere to the king of England against their native prince, if the latter should break his engagements; and that the fortresses of Edinburgh, Stirling, Berwick, Roxborough, and Jedborough, should be delivered into Henry's hands, till the performance of ar-

^p Rymer, vol. i. p. 35. Bened. Abb. p. 88. Hoveden, p. 540. Diceto, p. 583. Brompton, p. 1098. Heming. p. 505. Chron. Dunst. p. 36.

ticles^q. This severe and humiliating treaty was executed in its full rigour. William, being released, brought up all his barons, prelates, and abbots; and they did homage to Henry in the cathedral of York, and acknowledged him and his successors for their superior lord^r. The English monarch stretched still farther the rigour of the conditions which he exacted. He engaged the king and states of Scotland to make a perpetual cession of the fortresses of Berwick, and Roxborough, and to allow the castle of Edinburgh to remain in his hands for a limited time. This was the first great ascendant which England obtained over Scotland; and indeed the first important transaction which had passed between the kingdoms. Few princes have been so fortunate as to gain considerable advantages over their weaker neighbours with less violence and injustice than was practised by Henry against the king of the Scots, whom he had taken prisoner in battle, and who had wantonly engaged in a war, in which all the neighbours of that prince, and even his own family, were, without provocation, combined against^s him^s.

^q M. Paris, p. 91. Chron. Dunst. p. 36. Hoveden, p. 545. M. West. p. 251. Diceto, p. 584. Brompton, p. 1103. Rymer, vol. i. p. 39. Liber Niger Scaccarii, p. 36.

^r Bened. Abb. p. 113.

^s Some Scotch historians pretend, that William paid, besides, 100,000 pounds of ransom, which is quite incredible. The ransom of Richard I. who, besides England, possessed so many rich

KING'S EQUITABLE ADMINISTRATION.

1176.

HENRY having thus, contrary to expectation, extricated himself with honour from a situation in which his throne was exposed to great danger, was employed for several years in the administration of justice, in the execution of the laws, and in guarding against those inconveniencies, which either the past convulsions of his state, or the political institutions of that age, unavoidably occasioned. The provisions which he made, show such largeness of thought as qualified him for being a legislator; and they were commonly calculated as well for the future as the present happiness of his kingdom.

He enacted severe penalties against robbery, murder, false coining, arson; and ordained that these crimes should be punished by the amputation of the right hand and right foot¹. The pecuniary commutation for crimes, which has a false appearance of lenity, had been gradually disused; and seems to have been entirely abolished by the rigour of these statutes. The superstitious trial by water ordeal, though condemned by the

territories in France, was only 150,000 marks, and yet was levied with great difficulty. Indeed, two thirds of it only could be paid before his deliverance.

¹ Bened. Abb. p. 132. Hoveden, p. 549.

church^u, still subsisted ; but Henry ordained, that any man accused of murder, or any heinous felony, by the oath of the legal knights of the county, should, even though acquitted by the ordeal, be obliged to abjure the realm^x.

All advances towards reason and good sense are slow and gradual. Henry, though sensible of the great absurdity attending the trial by duel or battle, did not venture to abolish it : he only admitted either of the parties to challenge a trial by an assize or jury of twelve freeholders^y. This latter method of trial seems to have been very ancient in England, and was fixed by the laws of king Alfred : but the barbarous and violent genius of the age had of late given more credit to the trial by battle, which had become the general method of deciding all important controversies. It was never abolished by law in England ; and there is an instance of it so late as the reign of Elizabeth : but the institution revived by this king, being found more reasonable and more suitable to a civilized people, gradually prevailed over it.

The partition of England into four divisions, and the appointment of itinerant justices to go the circuit in each division, and to decide the causes in the counties, was another important ordinance of this prince, which had a direct tendency to curb the oppressive barons, and to protect the inferior gentry and common people in their pro-

^u Seld. Spicileg. ad Eadm. p. 204.

^x Bened. Abb. p. 132.

^y Glanv. lib. ii. cap. 7.

perty^z. Those justices were either prelates or considerable noblemen ; who, besides carrying the authority of the king's commission, were able, by the dignity of their own character, to give weight and credit to the laws.

That there might be fewer obstacles to the execution of justice, the king was vigilant in demolishing all the new-erected castles of the nobility, in England as well as in his foreign dominions ; and he permitted no fortress to remain in the custody of those whom he found reason to suspect^a.

But lest the kingdom should be weakened by this demolition of the fortresses, the king fixed an assize of arms, by which all his subjects were obliged to put themselves in a situation for defending themselves and the realm. Every man possessed of a knight's fee was ordained to have for each fee a coat of mail, a helmet, a shield, and a lance ; every free layman, possessed of goods to the value of sixteen marks, was to be armed in like manner ; every one that possessed ten marks was obliged to have an iron gorget, a cap of iron, and a lance ; all burgesses were to have a cap of iron, a lance, and a wambais ; that is, a coat quilted with wool, tow, or such-like materials^b. It appears that archery, for which the English were afterwards so renowned, had not, at this time,

^z Hoveden, p. 590. ^a Bened. Abb. p. 202. Diceto, p. 585.

^b Bened. Abb. p. 305. Annal. Waverl. p. 161.

become very common among them. The spear was the chief weapon employed in battle.

The clergy and the laity were, during that age, in a strange situation with regard to each other, and such as may seem totally incompatible with a civilized, and indeed with any species of government. If a clergyman were guilty of murder, he could be punished by degradation only: if he were murdered, the murderer was exposed to nothing but excommunication and ecclesiastical censures; and the crime was atoned for by penances and submission^c. Hence the assassins of Thomas a Becket himself, though guilty of the most atrocious wickedness, and the most repugnant to the sentiments of that age, lived securely in their own houses, without being called to account by Henry himself, who was so much concerned, both in honour and interest, to punish that crime, and who professed, or affected on all occasions, the most extreme abhorrence of it. It was not till they found their presence shunned by every one as excommunicated persons, that they were induced to take a journey to Rome, to throw themselves at the feet of the pontiff, and to submit to the penances imposed upon them: after which, they continued to possess, without molestation, their honours and fortunes, and seem even to have recovered the countenance and good opinion of the public. But as the king, by the constitutions of Clarendon, which he endeavoured still

^c Petri Blessen. epist. 73. apud Bibl. Patr. tom xxiv. p. 992.

to maintain^d, had subjected the clergy to a trial by the civil magistrate, it seemed but just to give them the protection of that power to which they owed obedience: it was enacted, that the murderers of clergymen should be tried before the justiciary, in the presence of the bishop or his official; and besides the usual punishment for murder, should be subjected to a forfeiture of their estates, and a confiscation of their goods and chattels^e.

The king passed an equitable law, that the goods of a vassal should not be seized for the debt of his lord, unless the vassal be surety for the debt; and that the rents of vassals should be paid to the creditors of the lord, not to the lord himself. It is remarkable that this law was enacted by the king in a council which he held at Verneüil, and which consisted of some prelates and barons of England, as well as some of Normandy, Poictou, Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and Brittany; and the statute took place in all these last-mentioned territories^f, though totally unconnected with each other^g; a certain proof how irregular the ancient

^d Chron. Gervase, p. 1433.

^e Diceto, p. 592. Chron.

Gervase, p. 1433.

^f Bened. Abb. p. 248. It was usual for the kings of England, after the conquest of Ireland, to summon barons and members of that country to the English parliament. Molineux's Case of Ireland, p. 64, 65, 66.

^g Spelman even doubts whether the law were not also extended to England. If it were not, it could only be because Henry did not chuse it; for his authority was greater in that kingdom than in his transmarine dominions.

feudal government was, and how near the sovereigns, in some instances, approached to despotism, though in others they seemed scarcely to possess any authority. If a prince much dreaded and revered, like Henry, obtained but the appearance of general consent to an ordinance which was equitable and just, it became immediately an established law, and all his subjects acquiesced in it. If the prince was hated or despised; if the nobles who supported him had small influence; if the humours of the times disposed the people to question the justice of his ordinance; the fullest and most authentic assembly had no authority. Thus all was confusion and disorder; no regular idea of a constitution; force and violence decided every thing.

The success which had attended Henry in his wars did not much encourage his neighbours to form any attempt against him; and his transactions with them, during several years, contain little memorable. Scotland remained in that state of feudal subjection to which he had reduced it, and gave him no farther inquietude. He sent over his fourth son, John, into Ireland, with a view of making a more complete conquest of the island; but the petulance and incapacity of this prince, by which he enraged the Irish chieftains, obliged the king soon after to recal him^h. The king of France had fallen into an abject superstition; and was induced, by a devotion more sincere than

^h Bened. Abb. p. 437, &c.

that of Henry, to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Becket, in order to obtain his intercession for the cure of Philip, his eldest son. He probably thought himself well entitled to the favour of that saint, on account of their ancient intimacy; and hoped that Becket, whom he had protected while on earth, would not now, when he was so highly exalted in heaven, forget his old friend and benefactor. The monks, sensible that their saint's honour was concerned in the case, failed not to publish that Lewis's prayers were answered, and that the young prince was restored to health by Becket's intercession. That king himself was soon after struck with an apoplexy, which deprived him of his understanding: Philip, though a youth of fifteen, took on him the administration, till his father's death, which happened soon after, opened his way to the throne; and he proved the ablest and greatest monarch that had governed that kingdom since the age of Charlemagne. The superior years, however, and experience of Henry, while they moderated his ambition, gave him such an ascendant over this prince, that no dangerous rivalry, for a long time, arose between them. The English monarch, instead of taking advantage of his own situation, rather employed his good offices in composing the quarrels which arose in the royal family of France; and he was successful in mediating a reconciliation between Philip and his mother and uncles. These services were but ill requited by Philip, who, when he came to man's

estate, fomented all the domestic discords in the royal family of England, and encouraged Henry's sons in their ungrateful and undutiful behaviour towards him.

Prince Henry, equally impatient of obtaining power, and incapable of using it, renewed to the king the demand of his resigning Normandy; and on meeting with a refusal, he fled with his consort to the court of France: but not finding Philip at that time disposed to enter into war for his sake, he accepted of his father's offers of reconciliation, and made him submissions. It was a cruel circumstance in the king's fortune, that he could hope for no tranquillity from the criminal enterprises of his sons but by their mutual discord and animosities, which disturbed his family, and threw his state into convulsions. Richard, whom he had made master of Guienne, and who had displayed his valour and military genius by suppressing the revolts of his mutinous barons, refused to obey Henry's orders, in doing homage to his elder brother for that dutchy; and he defended himself against young Henry and Geoffrey, who, uniting their arms, carried war into his territories¹. The king, with some difficulty, composed this difference; but immediately found his eldest son engaged in conspiracies, and ready to take arms against himself. While the young prince was conducting these criminal intrigues, he was seized with a fever at Martel, a castle near

¹ Ypod. Neust. p. 451. Bened. Abb. p. 383. Diceto, p. 617.

Turenne, to which he had retired in discontent ; and seeing the approaches of death, he was at last struck with remorse for his undutiful behaviour towards his father. He sent a message to the king, who was not far distant ; expressed his contrition for his faults ; and entreated the favour of a visit, that he might at least die with the satisfaction of having obtained his forgiveness. Henry, who had so often experienced the prince's ingratitude and violence, apprehended that his sickness was entirely feigned, and he durst not entrust himself into his son's hands : but when he soon after received intelligence of young Henry's death, and the proofs of his sincere repentance, this good prince was affected with the deepest sorrow ; he thrice fainted away ; he accused his own hard-heartedness in refusing the dying request of his son ; and he lamented that he had deprived that prince of the last opportunity of making atonement for his offences, and of pouring out his soul in the bosom of his reconciled father^k. This prince died in the twenty-eighth year of his age.

The behaviour of his surviving children did not tend to give the king any consolation for the loss. As prince Henry had left no posterity, Richard was become heir to all his dominions ; and the king intended that John, his third surviving son and favourite, should inherit Guienne as his appanage : but Richard refused his consent, fled into that dutchy, and even made preparations

^k Bened. Abb. p. 393. Hoveden, p. 621. Trivet, vol. i. p. 84.

for carrying on war, as well against his father as against his brother Geoffrey, who was now put in possession of Brittany. Henry sent for Eleanor his queen, the heiress of Guienne, and required Richard to deliver up to her the dominion of these territories; which that prince, either dreading an insurrection of the Gascons in her favour, or retaining some sense of duty towards her, readily performed; and he peaceably returned to his father's court. No sooner was this quarrel accommodated, than Geoffrey, the most vicious perhaps of all Henry's unhappy family, broke out into violence; demanded Anjou to be annexed to his dominions of Brittany; and on meeting with a refusal, fled to the court of France, and levied forces against his father¹. Henry was freed from this danger by his son's death, who was killed in a tournament at Paris^m. The widow of Geoffrey, soon after his decease, was delivered of a son, who received the name of Arthur, and was invested in the dutchy of Brittany, under the guardianship of his grandfather, who, as duke of Normandy, was also superior lord of that territory. Philip, as lord paramount, disputed some time his title to this wardship; but was obliged to yield to the inclinations of the Bretons, who preferred the government of Henry.

¹Neubrig. p. 422.

^mBened. Abb. p. 451. Cron. Gervase, p. 1480.

CRUSADES. 1185.

BUT the rivalship between these potent princes, and all their inferior interest, seemed now to have given place to the general passion for the relief of the Holy Land, and the expulsion of the Saracens. Those infidels, though obliged to yield to the immense inundation of Christians in the first crusade, had recovered courage after the torrent was past; and attacking on all quarters the settlements of the Europeans, had reduced these adventurers to great difficulties, and obliged them to apply again for succours from the West. A second crusade, under the Emperor Conrade, and Lewis VII. king of France, in which there perished above 200,000 men, brought them but a temporary relief; and those princes, after losing such immense armies, and seeing the flower of their nobility fall by their side, returned with little honour into Europe. But these repeated misfortunes, which drained the western world of its people and treasure, were not yet sufficient to cure men of their passion for those spiritual adventures; and a new incident rekindled with fresh fury the zeal of the ecclesiastics and military adventurers among the Latin Christians. Saladin, a prince of great generosity, bravery, and conduct, having fixed himself on the throne of Egypt, began to extend his conquests over the east; and finding the settlement of the

Christians in Palestine an invincible obstacle to the progress of his arms, he bent the whole force of his policy and valour to subdue that small and barren, but important territory. Taking advantage of dissensions which prevailed among the champions of the cross, and having secretly gained the count of Tripoli, who commanded their armies, he invaded the frontiers with a mighty power; and, aided by the treachery of that count, gained over them at Tiberaide a complete victory, which utterly annihilated the force of the already languishing kingdom of Jerusalem. The holy city itself fell into his hands, after a feeble resistance; the kingdom of Antioch was almost entirely subdued; and, except some maritime towns, nothing considerable remained of those boasted conquests, which, near a century before, it had cost the efforts of all Europe to acquire".

The western Christians were astonished on receiving this dismal intelligence. Pope Urban III. it is pretended, died of grief; and his successor, Gregory VIII. employed the whole time of his short pontificate in rousing to arms all the Christians who acknowledged his authority. The general cry was, that they were unworthy of enjoying any inheritance in heaven, who did not vindicate from the dominion of the infidels the inheritance of God on earth, and deliver from slavery that country which had been consecrated by the footsteps of their Redeemer. William

" M. Paris, p. 100.

archbishop of Tyre, having procured a conference between Henry and Philip near Gisors, enforced all these topics; gave a pathetic description of the miserable state of the eastern Christians; and employed every argument to excite the ruling passions of the age, superstition, and jealousy of military honour°. The two monarchs immediately took the cross; many of their most considerable vassals imitated the example^p; and as the emperor Frederic I. entered into the same confederacy, some well-grounded hopes of success were entertained; and men flattered themselves, that an enterprise which had failed under the conduct of many independent leaders, or of imprudent princes, might at last, by the efforts of such potent and able monarchs, be brought to a happy issue.

The kings of France and England imposed a tax amounting to the tenth of all moveable goods, on such as remained at home^q; but as they exempted from this burden most of the regular clergy, the secular aspired to the same immunity; pretended that their duty obliged them to assist the crusade with their prayers alone; and it was with some difficulty they were constrained to desist from an opposition, which in them, who had been the chief promoters of those pious enterprises, appeared with the worst grace imaginable^r. This backwardness of the clergy is perhaps a symptom, that the enthusiastic ardour which had

° Bened. Abb. p. 531. ^p Neubrig. p. 435. Heming. p. 512.

^q Bened. Abb. p. 498.

^r Petri Blessen. epist. 112.

at first seized the people for crusades, was now by time and ill success considerably abated; and that the frenzy was chiefly supported by the military genius and love of glory in the monarchs.

REVOLT OF PRINCE RICHARD. 1189.

BUT before this great machine could be put in motion, there were still many obstacles to surmount. Philip, jealous of Henry's power, entered into a private confederacy with young Richard; and, working on his ambitious and impatient temper, persuaded him, instead of supporting and aggrandising that monarchy which he was one day to inherit, to seek present power and independence by disturbing and dismembering it. In order to give a pretence for hostilities between the two kings, Richard broke into the territories of Raymond count of Toulouse, who immediately carried complaints of this violence before the king of France as his superior lord. Philip remonstrated with Henry; but received for answer, that Richard had confessed to the archbishop of Dublin that his enterprise against Raymond had been undertaken by the approbation of Philip himself, and was conducted by his authority. The king of France, who might have been covered with shame and confusion by this detection, still prosecuted his design, and invaded the provinces

of Berri and Auvergne, under colour of revenging the quarrel of the count of Toulouse^s. Henry retaliated, by making inroads upon the frontiers of France, and burning Dreux. As this war, which destroyed all hopes of success in the projected crusade, gave great scandal, the two kings held a conference at the accustomed place between Gisors and Trie, in order to find means of accommodating their differences: they separated on worse terms than before; and Philip, to shew his disgust, ordered a great elm, under which the conferences had usually been held, to be cut down^t; as if he had renounced all desire of accommodation, and was determined to carry the war to extremities against the king of England. But his own vassals refused to serve under him in so invidious a cause^u; and he was obliged to come anew to a conference with Henry, and to offer terms of peace. These terms were such as entirely opened the eyes of the king of England, and fully convinced him of the perfidy of his son, and his secret alliance with Philip, of which he had before only entertained some suspicion. The king of France required that Richard should be crowned king of England in the lifetime of his father, should be invested in all his transmarine dominions, and should immediately espouse Alice, Philip's sister, to whom he had formerly been

^s Bened. Abb. p. 508.

^t Ibid. p. 517, 532.

^u Ibid. p. 519.

affianced, and who had already been conducted into England^w. Henry had experienced such fatal effects, both from the crowning of his eldest son, and from that prince's alliance with the royal family of France, that he rejected these terms; and Richard, in consequence of his secret agreement with Philip, immediately revolted from him^x, did homage to the king of France for all the dominions which Henry held of that crown, and received the investitures as if he had already been the lawful possessor. Several historians assert, that Henry himself had become enamoured of young Alice, and mention this as an additional reason for his refusing these conditions: but he had so many other just and equitable motives for his conduct, that it is superfluous to assign a cause, which the great prudence and advanced age of that monarch render somewhat improbable.

Cardinal Albano, the pope's legate, displeased with these increasing obstacles to the crusade, excommunicated Richard, as the chief spring of discord: but the sentence of excommunication, which, when it was properly prepared, and was zealously supported by the clergy, had often great influence in that age, proved entirely ineffectual in the present case. The chief barons of Poictou, Guienne, Normandy, and Anjou, being attached to the young prince, and finding that he had now received the investiture from their superior lord,

^w Bened. Abb. p. 521. Hoveden, p. 652.

^x Brompton, p. 1149. Neubrig. p. 437.

declared for him, and made inroads into the territories of such as still adhered to the king. Henry, disquieted by the daily revolts of his mutinous subjects, and dreading still worse effects from their turbulent disposition, had again recourse to papal authority; and engaged the cardinal Anagni, who had succeeded Albano in the legateship, to threaten Philip with laying an interdict on all his dominions. But Philip, who was a prince of great vigour and capacity, despised the menace, and told Anagni, that it belonged not to the pope to interpose in the temporal disputes of princes, much less in those between him and his rebellious vassal. He even proceeded so far as to reproach him with partiality, and with receiving bribes from the king of England^y; while Richard, still more outrageous, offered to draw his sword against the legate, and was hindered by the interposition alone of the company, from committing violence upon him^z.

The king of England was now obliged to defend his dominions by arms, and to engage in a war with France, and with his eldest son, a prince of great valour, on such disadvantageous terms. Ferté-Bernard fell first into the hands of the enemy: Mans was next taken by assault; and Henry, who had thrown himself into that place, escaped with some difficulty^a: Amboise, Chau-

^y M. Paris, p. 104. Bened. Abb. p. 542. Hoveden, p. 652.

^z M. Paris, p. 104. ^a M. Paris, p. 105. Bened. Abb. p. 543. Hoveden, p. 653.

mont, and Chateau de Loire, opened their gates on the appearance of Philip and Richard: Tours was menaced; and the king, who had retired to Saumur, and had daily instances of the cowardice or infidelity of his governors, expected the most dismal issue to all his enterprises. While he was in this state of despondency, the duke of Burgundy, the earl of Flanders, and the archbishop of Rheims, interposed with their good offices; and the intelligence which he received of the taking of Tours, and which made him fully sensible of the desperate situation of his affairs, so subdued his spirit that he submitted to all the rigorous terms which were imposed upon him. He agreed, that Richard should marry the princess Alice; that that prince should receive the homage and oath of fealty of all his subjects both in England and his transmarine dominions; that he himself should pay twenty thousand marks to the king of France as a compensation for the charges of the war; that his own barons should engage to make him observe this treaty by force, and in case of his violating it, should promise to join Philip and Richard against him; and that all his vassals who had entered into confederacy with Richard, should receive an indemnity for the offence^b.

^b M. Paris, p. 106. Bened. Abb. p. 545. Hoveden, p. 653.

DEATH. 6th July.

BUT the mortification which Henry, who had been accustomed to give the law in most treaties, received from these disadvantageous terms, was the least that he met with on this occasion. When he demanded a list of those barons to whom he was bound to grant a pardon for their connections with Richard, he was astonished to find at the head of them the name of his second son John^c; who had always been his favourite, whose interests he had ever anxiously at heart, and who had even, on account of his ascendant over him, often excited the jealousy of Richard^d. The unhappy father, already overloaded with cares and sorrows, finding his last disappointment in his domestic tenderness, broke out into expressions of the utmost despair, cursed the day in which he received his miserable being, and bestowed on his ungrateful and undutiful children a malediction which he never could be prevailed on to retract^e. The more his heart was disposed to friendship and affection, the more he resented the barbarous return which his four sons had successively made to his parental care; and this finishing blow, by depriving him of every comfort in life, quite broke his spirit, and threw him into a lingering

^c Hoveden, p. 654.^d Bened. Abb. p. 541.^e Hoveden, p. 654.

fever, of which he expired at the castle of Chinon near Saumur. His natural son Geoffrey, who alone had behaved dutifully towards him, attended his corpse to the nunnery of Fontervault; where it lay in state in the abbey-church. Next day Richard, who came to visit the dead body of his father, and who, notwithstanding his criminal conduct, was not wholly destitute of generosity, was struck with horror and remorse at the sight; and as the attendants observed, that at that very instant, blood gushed from the mouth and nostrils of the corpse^f, he exclaimed, agreeably to a vulgar superstition, that he was his father's murderer; and he expressed a deep sense, though too late, of that undutiful behaviour which had brought his parent to an untimely grave^g.

CHARACTER OF HENRY.

THUS died, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and thirty-fifth of his reign, the greatest prince of his time for wisdom, virtue, and abilities, and the most powerful in extent of dominion of all those that had ever filled the throne of England. His character, in private as well as in public life, is almost without a blemish; and he seems to have possessed every accomplishment, both of body and mind, which makes a man either estimable

^f Bened. Abb. p. 547. Brompton, p. 1151.

^g M. Paris, p. 107.

or amiable. He was of a middle stature, strong and well proportioned; his countenance was lively and engaging; his conversation affable and entertaining; his elocution easy, persuasive, and ever at command. He loved peace, but possessed both bravery and conduct in war; was provident without timidity; severe in the execution of justice without rigour; and temperate without austerity. He preserved health, and kept himself from corpulency, to which he was somewhat inclined, by an abstemious diet, and by frequent exercise, particularly hunting. When he could enjoy leisure, he recreated himself either in learned conversation or in reading; and he cultivated his natural talents by study, above any prince of his time. His affections, as well as his enmities, were warm and durable; and his long experience of the ingratitude and infidelity of men never destroyed the natural sensibility of his temper, which disposed him to friendship and society. His character has been transmitted to us by several writers who were his contemporaries^h; and it extremely resembles, in its most remarkable features, that of his maternal grandfather Henry I.: excepting only, that ambition, which was a ruling passion in both, found not in the first Henry such unexceptionable means of exerting itself, and pushed that prince into measures, which were both criminal in themselves, and were the cause of farther

^h Petri Bles. epist. 46, 47. in *Bibliotheca Patrum*, vol. xxiv. p. 985, 986, &c. Girald. Camb. p. 783, &c.

crimes, from which his grandson's conduct was happily exempted.

MISCELLANEOUS TRANSACTIONS OF THIS REIGN. 1189.

THIS prince, like most of his predecessors of the Norman line, except Stephen, passed more of his time on the continent than in this island: he was surrounded with the English gentry and nobility, when abroad: the French gentry and nobility attended him when he resided in England: both nations acted in the government as if they were the same people; and, on many occasions, the legislatures seem not to have been distinguished. As the king and all the English barons were of French extraction, the manners of that people acquired the ascendant, and were regarded as the models of imitation. All foreign improvements, therefore, such as they were, in literature and politeness, in laws and arts, seem now to have been, in a good measure, transplanted into England; and that kingdom was become little inferior in all the fashionable accomplishments, to any of its neighbours on the continent. The more homely but more sensible manners and principles of the Saxons, were exchanged for the affectations of chivalry and the subtilties of school philosophy: the feudal ideas of civil government, the Romish sentiments in religion, had taken

entire possession of the people: by the former, the sense of submission towards princes was somewhat diminished in the barons; by the latter, the devoted attachment to papal authority was much augmented among the clergy. The Norman and other foreign families established in England, had now struck deep root; and being entirely incorporated with the people, whom at first they oppressed and despised, they no longer thought that they needed the protection of the crown for the enjoyment of their possessions, or considered their tenure as precarious. They aspired to the same liberty and independence which they saw enjoyed by their brethren on the continent, and desired to restrain those exorbitant prerogatives and arbitrary practices, which the necessities of war and the violence of conquest had at first obliged them to indulge in their monarch. That memory also of a more equal government under the Saxon princes, which remained with the English, diffused still farther the spirit of liberty, and made the barons both desirous of more independence to themselves, and willing to indulge it to the people. And it was not long ere this secret revolution in the sentiments of men produced, first violent convulsions in the state, then an evident alteration in the maxims of government.

The history of all the preceding kings of England since the conquest, gives evident proofs of the disorders attending the feudal institutions; the licentiousness of the barons, their spirit of

rebellion against the prince and laws, and of animosity against each other: the conduct of the barons in the transmarine dominions of those monarchs, afforded perhaps still more flagrant instances of these convulsions; and the history of France, during several ages, consists almost entirely of narrations of this nature. The cities, during the continuance of this violent government, could neither be very numerous nor populous; and there occur instances which seem to evince, that, though these are always the first seat of law and liberty, their police was in general loose and irregular, and exposed to the same disorders with those by which the country was generally infested. It was a custom in London for great numbers, to the amount of a hundred or more, the sons and relations of considerable citizens, to form themselves into a licentious confederacy, to break into rich houses and plunder them, to rob and murder the passengers, and to commit with impunity all sorts of disorder. By these crimes, it had become so dangerous to walk the streets by night, that the citizens durst no more venture abroad after sun-set, than if they had been exposed to the incursions of a public enemy. The brother of the earl of Ferrars had been murdered by some of those nocturnal rioters; and the death of so eminent a person, which was much more regarded than that of many thousands of an inferior station, so provoked the king that he swore vengeance against the criminals,

and became thenceforth more rigorous in the execution of the Lawsⁱ.

There is another instance given by historians, which proves to what a height such riots had proceeded, and how open these criminals were in committing their robberies. A band of them had attacked the house of a rich citizen, with an intention of plundering it; had broken through a stone-wall with hammers and wedges; and had already entered the house sword in hand; when the citizen, armed cap-a-pee, and supported by his faithful servants, appeared in the passage to oppose them: he cut off the right hand of the first robber that entered; and made such stout resistance, that his neighbours had leisure to assemble, and come to his relief. The man who lost his hand was taken; and was tempted by the promise of pardon to reveal his confederates; among whom was one John Senex, esteemed among the richest and best-born citizens in London. He was convicted by the ordeal; and though he offered five hundred marks for his life, the king refused the money, and ordered him to be hanged^k. It appears from a statute of Edward I. that these disorders were not remedied even in that reign. It was then made penal to go out at night after the hour of the curfew, to carry a weapon, or to walk without a light or lanthorn^l. It is said in the preamble to this law, that, both by night and

ⁱ Bened. Abb. p. 196.

^k Bened. Abb. p. 197, 198.

^l Observations on the ancient Statutes, p. 216.

by day, there were continual frays in the streets of London.

Henry's care in administering justice had gained him so great a reputation, that even foreign and distant princes made him arbiter, and submitted their differences to his judgment. Sanchez king of Navarre, having some controversies with Alfonso king of Castile, was contented, though Alfonso had married the daughter of Henry, to chuse this prince for a referee; and they agreed, each of them to consign three castles into neutral hands, as a pledge of their not departing from his award. Henry made the cause be examined before his great council, and gave a sentence, which was submitted to by both parties. These two Spanish kings sent each a stout champion to the court of England, in order to defend his cause by arms, in case the way of duel had been chosen by Henry^m.

Henry so far abolished the barbarous and absurd practice of confiscating ships which had been wrecked on the coast, that he ordained, if one man or animal were alive in the ship, that the vessel and goods should be restored to the ownersⁿ.

The reign of Henry was remarkable also for an innovation which was afterwards carried farther by his successors, and was attended with the most important consequences. This prince was disgusted with the species of military force which was

^m Rymer, vol. iv. p. 43. Bened. Abb. p. 172. Diceto, p. 597. Brompton, p. 1120.

ⁿ Rymer, vol. i. p. 36.

established by the feudal institutions, and which, though it was extremely burdensome to the subject, yet rendered very little service to the sovereign. The barons, or military tenants, came late into the field; they were obliged to serve only forty days; they were unskilful and disorderly in all their operations; and they were apt to carry into the camp the same refractory and independent spirit, to which they were accustomed in their civil government. Henry, therefore, introduced the practice of making a commutation of their military service for money; and he levied scutages from his baronies and knights fees, instead of requiring the personal attendance of his vassals. There is mention made, in the history of the exchequer, of these scutages in his second, fifth, and eighteenth year^o; and other writers give us an account of three more of them^p. When the prince had thus obtained money, he made a contract with some of those adventurers in which Europe at that time abounded: they found him soldiers of the same character with themselves, who were bound to serve for a stipulated time: the armies were less numerous, but more useful, than when composed of all the military vassals of the crown: the feudal institutions began to relax: the kings became rapacious for money, on which all their power depended: the barons, seeing no end of exactions, sought to defend their property:

^o Madox, p. 435, 436, 437, 438.

^p Tyrel, vol. ii. p. 466, from the records.

and as the same causes had nearly the same effects in the different countries of Europe, the several crowns either lost or acquired authority, according to their different success in the contest.

This prince was also the first that levied a tax on the moveables or personal estates of his subjects, nobles as well as commons. Their zeal for the holy wars made them submit to this innovation; and a precedent being once obtained, this taxation became, in following reigns, the usual method of supplying the necessities of the crown. The tax of Danegelt, so generally odious to the nation, was remitted in this reign.

It was a usual practice of the kings of England, to repeat the ceremony of their coronation thrice every year, on assembling the states at the three great festivals. Henry, after the first years of his reign, never renewed this ceremony, which was found to be very expensive and very useless. None of his successors revived it. It is considered as a great act of grace in this prince, that he mitigated the rigour of the forest laws, and punished any transgressions of them, not capitally, but by fines, imprisonments, and other more moderate penalties.

Since we are here collecting some detached incidents, which show the genius of the age, and which could not so well enter into the body of our history, it may not be improper to mention the quarrel between Roger archbishop of York, and Richard archbishop of Canterbury. We may

judge of the violence of military men and laymen, when ecclesiastics could proceed to such extremities. Cardinal Haguezun being sent, in 1176, as legate into Britain, summoned an assembly of the clergy at London; and as both the archbishops pretended to sit on his right hand, this question of precedency begat a controversy between them. The monks and retainers of archbishop Richard fell upon Roger, in the presence of the cardinal and of the synod, threw him to the ground, trampled him under foot, and so bruised him with blows, that he was taken up half dead, and his life was, with difficulty, saved from their violence. The archbishop of Canterbury was obliged to pay a large sum of money to the legate, in order to suppress all complaints with regard to this enormity^a.

We are told by Gyraldus Cambrensis, that the monks and prior of St. Swithun threw themselves, one day, prostrate on the ground and in the mire before Henry, complaining, with many tears and much doleful lamentation, that the bishop of Winchester, who was also their abbot, had cut off three dishes from their table. How many has he left you? said the king. Ten only, replied the disconsolate monks. I myself, exclaimed the king, never have more than three;

^a Bened. Abb. p. 138, 139. Brompton, p. 1109. Chron. Gerv. p. 1433. Neubrig. p. 413.

and I enjoin your bishop to reduce you to the same number^r.

This king left only two legitimate sons, Richard who succeeded him, and John who inherited no territory, though his father had often intended to leave him a part of his extensive dominions. He was thence commonly denominated *Lackland*. Henry left three legitimate daughters; Maud, born in 1156, and married to Henry duke of Saxony; Eleanor, born in 1162, and married to Alphonso king of Castile; Joan, born in 1165, and married to William king of Sicily^s.

Henry is said by ancient historians to have been of a very amorous disposition: they mention two of his natural sons by Rosamond, daughter of lord Clifford; namely, Richard Longespée, or Longsword (so called from the sword he usually wore), who was afterwards married to Ela, the daughter and heir of the earl of Salisbury; and Geoffrey, first bishop of Lincoln, then archbishop of York. All the other circumstances of the story, commonly told of that lady, seem to be fabulous.

^r Gir. Camb. cap. 5. in Anglia Sacra, vol. ii.

^s Diceto, p. 616.



Richard the First.



CHAP. X. p. 181.

He sent for Gourdon, and asked him, ‘Wretch, what have I ever done to you, to oblige you to seek my life?’—‘What have you done to me?’ replied coolly the prisoner. ‘You killed with your own hands my father and my two brothers; and you intended to have hanged myself: I am now in your power, and you may take revenge, by inflicting on me the most severe torments: but I shall endure them all with pleasure, provided I can think that I have been so happy as to rid the world of such a nuisance.’

CHAPTER X.

The King's Preparations for the Crusade Sets out on the Crusade Transactions in Sicily King's Arrival in Palestine State of Palestine Disorders in England The King's heroic Actions in Palestine His Return from Palestine Captivity in Germany War with France The King's Delivery Return to England War with France Death and Character of the King Miscellaneous Transactions of this Reign.

RICHARD I.

THE compunction of Richard for his undutiful behaviour towards his father was durable, and influenced him in the choice of his ministers and servants after his accession. Those who had seconded and favoured his rebellion, instead of meeting with that trust and honour which they expected, were surprised to find that they lay under disgrace with the new king, and were on all occasions hated and despised by him. The faithful ministers of Henry, who had vigorously opposed all the enterprises of his sons, were received with open arms, and were continued in those offices which they had honourably discharged to their former master^t. This prudent

^t Hoveden, p. 655. Bened. Abb. p. 547. M. Paris, p. 107.

conduct might be the result of reflection ; but in a prince, like Richard, so much guided by passion, and so little by policy, it was commonly ascribed to a principle still more virtuous and more honourable.

Richard, that he might make atonement to one parent for his breach of duty to the other, immediately sent orders for releasing the queen-dowager from the confinement in which she had long been detained ; and he entrusted her with the government of England till his arrival in that kingdom. His bounty to his brother John was rather profuse and imprudent. Besides bestowing on him the county of Mortaigne in Normandy, granting him a pension of four thousand marks a year, and marrying him to Avisia the daughter of the earl of Gloucester, by whom he inherited all the possessions of that opulent family, he increased his appanage, which the late king had destined him, by other extensive grants and concessions. He conferred on him the whole estate of William Peverell, which had escheated to the crown : he put him in possession of eight castles, with all the forests and honours annexed to them : he delivered over to him no less than six earldoms, Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Nottingham, Dorset, Lancaster, and Derby : and endeavouring, by favours, to fix that vicious prince in his duty, he put it too much in his power, whenever he pleased, to depart from it.

THE KING'S PREPARATION FOR THE CRUSADE. 1189.

THE king, impelled more by the love of military glory than by superstition, acted, from the beginning of his reign, as if the sole purpose of his government had been the relief of the Holy Land, and the recovery of Jerusalem from the Saracens. This zeal against infidels, being communicated to his subjects, broke out in London on the day of his coronation, and made them find a crusade less dangerous, and attained with more immediate profit. The prejudices of the age had made the lending of money on interest pass by the invidious name of usury: yet the necessity of the practice had still continued it, and the greater part of that kind of dealing fell every where into the hands of the Jews; who, being already infamous on account of their religion, had no honour to lose, and were apt to exercise a profession, odious in itself, by every kind of rigour, and even sometimes by rapine and extortion. The industry and frugality of this people had put them in possession of all the ready money, which the idleness and profusion common to the English with other European nations, enabled them to lend at exorbitant and unequal interest. The monkish writers represent it as a great stain on the wise and equitable government of Henry that he had carefully protected this infidel race

from all injuries and insults ; but the zeal of Richard afforded the populace a pretence for venting their animosity against them. The king had issued an edict prohibiting their appearance at his coronation, but some of them bringing him large presents from their nation, presumed, in confidence of that merit, to approach the hall in which he dined : being discovered, they were exposed to the insults of the bystanders ; they took to flight ; the people pursued them ; the rumour was spread, that the king had issued orders to massacre all the Jews ; a command so agreeable was executed in an instant on such as fell into the hands of the populace ; those who had kept at home were exposed to equal danger ; the people, moved by rapacity and zeal, broke into their houses, which they plundered, after having murdered the owners ; where the Jews barricaded their doors and defended themselves with vigour, the rabble set fire to the houses, and made way through the flames to exercise their pillage and violence ; the usual licentiousness of London, which the sovereign power with difficulty restrained, broke out with fury, and continued these outrages ; the houses of the richest citizens, though Christians, were next attacked and plundered ; and weariness and satiety at last put an end to the disorder : yet, when the king empowered Glanville, the justiciary, to inquire into the authors of these crimes, the guilt was found to involve so many of the most considerable citi-

zens, that it was deemed more prudent to drop the prosecution; and very few suffered the punishment due to this enormity. But the disorder stopped not at London. The inhabitants of the other cities of England, hearing of this slaughter of the Jews, imitated the example: in York, five hundred of that nation, who had retired into the castle for safety, and found themselves unable to defend the place, murdered their own wives and children, threw the dead bodies over the walls upon the populace, and then setting fire to the houses, perished in the flames. The gentry of the neighbourhood, who were all indebted to the Jews, ran to the cathedral, where their bonds were kept, and made a solemn bonfire of the papers before the altar. The compiler of the *Annals of Waverley*, in relating these events, blesses the Almighty for thus delivering over this impious race to destruction^u.

The ancient situation of England, when the people possessed little riches and the public no credit, made it impossible for sovereigns to bear the expence of a steady or durable war even on their frontiers; much less could they find regular means for the support of distant expeditions like those into Palestine, which were more the result of popular frenzy than of sober reason or deliberate policy. Richard, therefore, knew that he must carry with him all the treasure necessary for

^u Gale's Collect. vol. iii. p. 165.

his enterprise; and that both the remoteness of his own country and its poverty made it unable to furnish him with those continued supplies which the exigencies of so perilous a war must necessarily require. His father had left him a treasure of above a hundred thousand marks; and the king, negligent of every consideration but his present object, endeavoured to augment this sum by all expedients, how pernicious soever to the public, or dangerous to royal authority. He put to sale the revenues and manors of the crown; the offices of greatest trust and power, even those of forester and sheriff, which anciently were so important^w, became venal; the dignity of chief justiciary, in whose hands was lodged the whole execution of the laws, was sold to Hugh de Puzas, bishop of Durham, for a thousand marks; the same prelate bought the earldom of Northumberland for life^x; many of the champions of the cross, who had repented of their vow, purchased the liberty of violating it; and Richard, who stood less in need of men than of money, dispensed, on these conditions, with their attendance. Elated with the hopes of fame, which in that age attended no wars but those against the infidels, he was blind to every other consideration; and when some of his wiser ministers ob-

^w The sheriff had anciently both the administration of justice and the management of the king's revenue committed to him in the county. See *Hale, of Sheriff's Account*.

^x M. Paris, p. 109.

jected to this dissipation of the revenue and power of the crown, he replied, that he would sell London itself, could he find a purchaser^y. Nothing indeed could be a stronger proof how negligent he was of all future interests in comparison of the crusade, than his selling, for so small a sum as 10,000 marks, the vassalage of Scotland, together with the fortresses of Roxburgh and Berwick, the greatest acquisition that had been made by his father during the course of his victorious reign; and his accepting the homage of William in the usual terms, merely for the territories which that prince held in England^z. The English, of all ranks and stations, were oppressed by numerous exactions: menaces were employed, both against the innocent and the guilty, in order to extort money from them: and where a pretence was wanting against the rich, the king obliged them, by the fear of his displeasure, to lend him sums which, he knew, it would never be in his power to repay.

But Richard, though he sacrificed every interest and consideration to the success of this pious enterprise, carried so little the appearance of sanctity in his conduct, that Fulk, curate of Neuilly, a zealous preacher of the crusade, who from that merit had acquired the privilege of speaking the boldest truths, advised him to rid

^y W. Heming, p. 519. Knyghton, p. 2402.

^z Hoveden, p. 662. Rymer, vol. i. p. 64. M. West. p. 257.

himself of his notorious vices, particularly his pride, avarice, and voluptuousness, which he called the king's three favourite daughters. *You counsel well*, replied Richard, *and I hereby dispose of the first to the Templars, of the second to the Benedictines, and of the third to my prelates.*

Richard, jealous of attempts which might be made on England during his absence, laid prince John, as well as his natural brother Geoffrey archbishop of York, under engagements, confirmed by their oaths, that neither of them should enter the kingdom till his return; though he thought proper, before his departure, to withdraw this prohibition. The administration was left in the hands of Hugh bishop of Durham, and of Longchamp bishop of Ely, whom he appointed justiciaries and guardians of the realm. The latter was a Frenchman of mean birth, and of a violent character; who by art and address had insinuated himself into favour, whom Richard had created chancellor, and whom he had engaged the pope also to invest with the legantine authority, that, by centering every kind of power in his person, he might the better ensure the public tranquillity. All the military and turbulent spirits flocked about the person of the king, and were impatient to distinguish themselves against the infidels in Asia; whither his inclinations, his engagements led him, and whither he was impelled by messages from the king of France, ready to embark in this enterprise.

The emperor Frederick, a prince of great spirit and conduct, had already taken the road to Palestine at the head of 150,000 men, collected from Germany and all the northern states. Having surmounted every obstacle thrown in his way by the artifices of the Greeks and the power of the infidels, he had penetrated to the borders of Syria; when bathing in the cold river Cydnus during the greatest heat of the summer season, he was seized with a mortal distemper, which put an end to his life and his rash enterprise^a. His army, under the command of his son Conrade, reached Palestine; but was so diminished by fatigue, famine, maladies, and the sword, that it scarcely amounted to eight thousand men; and was unable to make any progress against the great power, valour, and conduct of Saladin. These reiterated calamities attending the crusades had taught the kings of France and England the necessity of trying another road to the Holy Land; and they determined to conduct their armies thither by sea, to carry provisions along with them, and by means of their naval power, to maintain an open communication with their own states, and with the western parts of Europe. The place of rendezvous was appointed in the plains of Vezelay on the borders of Burgundy^b: Philip and Richard, on their arrival there, found their combined army amount to 100,000 men^c; a mighty force, ani-

^a Bened. Abb. p. 556.

^b Hoveden, p. 660.

^c Vinisauf, p. 305.

mated with glory and religion, conducted by two warlike monarchs, provided with every thing which their several dominions could supply, and not to be overcome but by their own misconduct, or by the unsurmountable obstacles of nature.

KING SETS OUT ON THE CRUSADE.

THE French prince and the English here reiterated their promises of cordial friendship, pledged their faith not to invade each other's dominions during the crusade, mutually exchanged the oaths of all their barons and prelates to the same effect, and subjected themselves to the penalty of interdicts and excommunications, if they should ever violate this public and solemn engagement. They then separated; Philip took the road to Genoa, Richard that to Marseilles, with a view of meeting their fleets, which were severally appointed to rendezvous in these harbours. They put to sea; and, nearly about the same time, were obliged, by stress of weather, to take shelter in Messina, where they were detained during the whole winter. This incident laid the foundation of animosities which proved fatal to their enterprise.

Richard and Philip were, by the situation and extent of their dominions, rivals in power; by their age and inclinations competitors for glory; and these causes of emulation which, had the princes been employed in the field against the

common enemy, might have stimulated them to martial enterprises, soon excited, during the present leisure and repose, quarrels between monarchs of such a fiery character. Equally haughty, ambitious, intrepid, and inflexible, they were irritated with the least appearance of injury, and were incapable, by mutual condescensions, to efface those causes of complaint which unavoidably arose between them. Richard, candid, sincere, undesigning, impolitic, violent, laid himself open, on every occasion, to the designs of his antagonist; who, provident, interested, intriguing, failed not to take all advantages against him: and thus, both the circumstances of their disposition in which they were similar, and those in which they differed, rendered it impossible for them to persevere in that harmony which was so necessary to the success of their undertaking.

TRANSACTIONS IN SICILY. 1190.

THE last king of Sicily and Naples was William II. who had married Joan, sister to Richard, and who, dying without issue, had bequeathed his dominions to his paternal aunt Constantia, the only legitimate descendant surviving of Roger, the first sovereign of those states who had been honoured with the royal title. This princess had, in expectation of that rich inheritance, been married to Henry VI. the reigning emperor^d; but

^d Bened. Abb. p. 580.

Tancred, her natural brother, had fixed such an interest among the barons, that, taking advantage of Henry's absence, he had acquired possession of the throne, and maintained his claim, by force of arms, against all the efforts of the Germans^e. The approach of the crusaders naturally gave him apprehensions for his unstable government; and he was uncertain, whether he had most reason to dread the presence of the French or of the English monarch. Philip was engaged in a strict alliance with the emperor his competitor; Richard was disgusted by his rigours towards the queen dowager, whom the Sicilian prince had confined in Palermo; because she had opposed with all her interest his succession to the crown. Tancred, therefore, sensible of the present necessity, resolved to pay court to both these formidable princes; and he was not unsuccessful in his endeavours. He persuaded Philip that it was highly improper for him to interrupt his enterprise against the infidels, by any attempt against a Christian state: he restored queen Joan to her liberty; and even found means to make an alliance with Richard, who stipulated by treaty to marry his nephew, Arthur, the young duke of Brittany, to one of the daughters of Tancred^f. But before these terms of friendship were settled, Richard, jealous both of Tancred and of the inhabitants of Messina, had taken up his quarters in the suburbs,

^e Hoveden, p. 663.

^f Hoveden, p. 676, 677. Bened. Abb. p. 615.

and had possessed himself of a small fort, which commanded the harbour ; and he kept himself extremely on his guard against their enterprises. The citizens took umbrage. Mutual insults and attacks passed between them and the English : Philip, who had quartered his troops in the town, endeavoured to accommodate the quarrel, and held a conference with Richard for that purpose. While the two kings, meeting in the open fields, were engaged in discourse on this subject, a body of those Sicilians seemed to be drawing towards them ; and Richard pushed forwards, in order to inquire into the reason of this extraordinary movement^s. The English, insolent from their power, and inflamed with former animosities, wanted but a pretence for attacking the Messinese : they soon chased them off the field, drove them into the town, and entered with them at the gates. The king employed his authority to restrain them from pillaging and massacring the defenceless inhabitants ; but he gave orders, in token of his victory, that the standard of England should be erected on the walls. Philip, who considered that place as his quarters, exclaimed against the insult, and ordered some of his troops to pull down the standard : but Richard informed him by a messenger, that, though he himself would willingly remove that ground of offence, he would not permit it to be done by others ; and if the French king attempted such an insult upon him

^s Bened. Abb. p. 608.

he should not succeed but by the utmost effusion of blood. Philip, content with this species of haughty submission, recalled his orders^h: the difference was seemingly accommodated; but still left the remains of rancour and jealousy in the breasts of the two monarchs.

Tancred, who, for his own security, desired to inflame their mutual hatred, employed an artifice which might have been attended with consequences still more fatal. He showed Richard a letter, signed by the French king, and delivered to him, as he pretended, by the duke of Burgundy; in which that monarch desired Tancred to fall upon the quarters of the English, and promised to assist him in putting them to the sword, as common enemies. The unwary Richard gave credit to the information; but was too candid not to betray his discontent to Philip, who absolutely denied the letter, and charged the Sicilian prince with forgery and falsehood. Richard either was, or pretended to be, entirely satisfiedⁱ.

Lest these jealousies and complaints should multiply between them, it was proposed, that they should, by a solemn treaty, obviate all future differences, and adjust every point that could possibly hereafter become a controversy between them. But this expedient started a new dispute, which might have proved more dangerous than any of the foregoing, and which deeply concerned

^h Hoveden, p. 674.

ⁱ Ibid. p. 688. Bened. Abb. p. 642, 643. Brompton, p. 1195.

the honour of Philip's family. When Richard, in every treaty with the late king, insisted so strenuously on being allowed to marry Alice of France, he had only sought a pretence for quarrelling; and never meant to take to his bed a princess suspected of a criminal amour with his own father. After he became master, he no longer spake of that alliance: he even took measures for espousing Berengaria, daughter of Sanchez king of Navarre, with whom he had become enamoured during his abode in Guienne^k; Queen Eleanor was daily expected with that princess at Messina^l: and when Philip renewed to him his applications for espousing his sister Alice, Richard was obliged to give him an absolute refusal. It is pretended by Hoveden, and other historians^m, that he was able to produce such convincing proofs of Alice's infidelity, and even of her having born a child to Henry, that her brother desisted from his applications, and chose to wrap up the dishonour of his family in silence and oblivion. It is certain, from the treaty itself, which remainsⁿ, that, whatever were his motives, he permitted Richard to give his hand to Berengaria; and having settled all other controversies with that prince, he immediately set sail for the Holy Land. Richard awaited some time the arrival of his mother and bride; and when they joined him, he separated

^k Vinisauf, p. 316.^l M. Paris, p. 112. Trivet, p. 102.

W. Heming. p. 519.

^m Hoveden, p. 688.ⁿ Rymer, vol. i.

p. 69. Chron. de Dunst. p. 44.

his fleet into two squadrons, and set forward on his enterprise. Queen Eleanor returned to England; but Berengaria, and the queen dowager of Sicily, his sister, attended him on the expedition^o.

The English fleet, on leaving the port of Messina, met with a furious tempest; and the squadron on which the two princesses were embarked, was driven on the coast of Cyprus, and some of the vessels were wrecked near Limisso, in that island. Isaac, prince of Cyprus, who assumed the magnificent title of emperor, pillaged the ships that were stranded, threw the seamen and passengers into prison, and even refused to the princesses liberty, in their dangerous situation, of entering the harbour of Limisso. But Richard, who arrived soon after, took ample vengeance on him for the injury. He disembarked his troops; defeated the tyrant, who opposed his landing; entered Limisso by storm; gained next day a second victory; obliged Isaac to surrender at discretion; and established governors over the island. The Greek prince, being thrown into prison and loaded with irons, complained of the little regard with which he was treated: upon which, Richard ordered silver fetters to be made for him; and this emperor, pleased with the distinction, expressed a sense of the generosity of his conqueror^p. The

^o Bened. Abb. p. 644.

^p Bened. Abb. p. 650. Ann. Waverl. p. 164. Vinisauf, p. 328. W. Heming. p. 523.

king here espoused Berengaria, who, immediately embarking, carried along with her to Palestine the daughter of the Cypriot prince ; a dangerous rival, who was believed to have seduced the affections of her husband. Such were the libertine character and conduct of the heroes engaged in this pious enterprise !

THE KING'S ARRIVAL IN PALESTINE.

THE English army arrived in time to partake in the glory of the siege of Acre or Ptolemais, which had been attacked for above two years by the united force of all the Christians in Palestine, and had been defended by the utmost efforts of Saladin, and the Saracens. The remains of the German army, conducted by the emperor Frederic, and the separate bodies of adventurers who continually poured in from the West, had enabled the king of Jerusalem to form this important enterprise^a : but Saladin, having thrown a strong garrison into the place under the command of Caracos, his own master in the art of war, and molesting the besiegers with continual attacks and sallies, had protracted the success of the enterprise, and wasted the force of his enemies. The arrival of Philip and Richard inspired new life into the Christians ; and these princes, acting by concert, and sharing the honour and danger of

^a Vinisauf, p. 269, 271, 279.

every action, gave hopes of a final victory over the infidels. They agreed on this plan of operations: when the French monarch attacked the town, the English guarded the trenches: next day, when the English prince conducted the assault, the French succeeded him in providing for the safety of the assailants. The emulation between those rival kings and rival nations produced extraordinary acts of valour: Richard in particular, animated with a more precipitate courage than Philip, and more agreeable to the romantic spirit of that age, drew to himself the general attention, and acquired a great and splendid reputation. But this harmony was of short duration; and occasions of discord soon arose between these jealous and haughty princes.

STATE OF PALESTINE.

THE family of Bouillon, which had first been placed on the throne of Jerusalem, ending in a female, Fulk, count of Anjou, grandfather to Henry II. of England, married the heiress of that kingdom, and transmitted his title to the younger branches of his family. The Anjevin race ending also in a female, Guy de Lusignan, by espousing Sibylla, the heiress, had succeeded to the title; and though he lost his kingdom by the invasion of Saladin, he was still acknowledged by all the Christians for king of Jerusalem^r. But as Sibylla

^r Vinisauf, p. 281.

died without issue, during the siege of Acre, Isabella, her younger sister, put in her claim to that titular kingdom, and required Lusignan to resign his pretensions to her husband Conrad marquis of Montferrat. Lusignan, maintaining that the royal title was unalienable and indefeazable, had recourse to the protection of Richard, attended on him before he left Cyprus, and engaged him to embrace his cause^s. There needed no other reason for throwing Philip into the party of Conrad; and the opposite views of these great monarchs brought faction and dissension into the Christian army, and retarded all its operations. The Templars, the Genoese, and the Germans, declared for Philip and Conrad; the Flemings, the Pisans, the knights of the hospital of St. John, adhered to Richard and Lusignan. But notwithstanding these disputes, as the length of the siege had reduced the Saracen garrison to the last extremity, they surrendered themselves prisoners; stipulated, in return for their lives, other advantages to the Christians, such as the restoring of the Christian prisoners, and the delivery of the wood of the true cross^t; and this great enterprise, which

^s Trivet, p. 134. Vinisau, p. 342. W. Heming. p. 524.

^t This true cross was lost in the battle of Tiberiade, to which it had been carried by the crusaders for their protection. Rigord, an author of that age, says, that after this dismal event, all the children who were born throughout all Christendom, had only twenty or twenty-two teeth, instead of thirty or thirty-two, which was their former complement, p. 14.

had long engaged the attention of all Europe and Asia, was at last, after the loss of 300,000 men, brought to a happy period.

But Philip, instead of pursuing the hopes of farther conquest, and of redeeming the holy city from slavery, being disgusted with the ascendant assumed and acquired by Richard, and having views of many advantages which he might reap by his presence in Europe, declared his resolution of returning to France; and he pleaded his bad state of health as an excuse for his desertion of the common cause. He left, however, to Richard, ten thousand of his troops, under the command of the duke of Burgundy; and he renewed his oath never to commence hostilities against that prince's dominions during his absence. But he had no sooner reached Italy than he applied, it is pretended, to pope Celestine III. for a dispensation from this vow; and when denied that request, he still proceeded, though after a covert manner, in a project, which the present situation of England rendered inviting, and which gratified, in an eminent degree, both his resentment and his ambition.

DISORDERS IN ENGLAND. 1191.

IMMEDIATELY after Richard had left England, and begun his march to the Holy Land, the two prelates, whom he had appointed guardians of the realm, broke out into animosities against each

other, and threw the kingdom into combustion. Longchamp, presumptuous in his nature, elated by the favour which he enjoyed with his master, and armed with the legantine commission, could not submit to an equality with the bishop of Durham: he even went so far as to arrest his colleague, and to extort from him a resignation of the earldom of Northumberland, and of his other dignities, as the price of his liberty^u. The king, informed of these dissensions, ordered, by letters from Marseilles, that the bishop should be reinstated in his offices; but Longchamp had still the boldness to refuse compliance, on pretence that he himself was better acquainted with the king's secret intentions^w. He proceeded to govern the kingdom by his sole authority; to treat all the nobility with arrogance; and to display his power and riches with an invidious ostentation. He never travelled without a strong guard of fifteen hundred foreign soldiers, collected from that licentious tribe with which the age was generally infested: nobles and knights were proud of being admitted into his train: his retinue wore the aspect of royal magnificence: and when, in his progress through the kingdom, he lodged in any monastery, his attendants, it is said, were sufficient to devour, in one night, the revenue of several years^x. The king, who was detained in Europe

^u Hoveden, p. 665. Knyghton, p. 2403. ^w W. Heming, p. 528. ^x Hoveden, p. 680. Bened. Abb. p. 626, 700. Brompton, p. 1193.

longer than the haughty prelate expected, hearing of this ostentation, which exceeded even what the habits of that age indulged in ecclesiastics; being also informed of the insolent tyrannical conduct of his minister; thought proper to restrain his power: he sent new orders, appointing Walter archbishop of Rouën, William Marshal earl of Strigul, Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, William Briewere, and Hugh Bardolf, counsellors to Longchamp, and commanding him to take no measure of importance without their concurrence and approbation. But such general terror had this man impressed by his violent conduct, that even the archbishop of Rouën and the earl of Strigul durst not produce this mandate of the king's; and Longchamp still maintained an uncontrolled authority over the nation. But when he proceeded so far as to throw into prison Geoffrey archbishop of York, who had opposed his measures, this breach of ecclesiastical privileges excited such an universal ferment, that prince John, disgusted with the small share he possessed in the government, and personally disobliged by Longchamp, ventured to summon, at Reading, a general council of the nobility and prelates, and cite him to appear before them. Longchamp thought it dangerous to entrust his person in their hands, and he shut himself up in the Tower of London; but being soon obliged to surrender that fortress, he fled beyond sea, concealed under a female habit, and was deprived of his offices of chancellor and

chief justiciary ; the last of which was conferred on the archbishop of Roüen, a prelate of prudence and moderation. The commission of legate, however, which had been renewed to Longchamp by pope Celestine, still gave him, notwithstanding his absence, great authority in the kingdom, enabled him to disturb the government, and forwarded the views of Philip, who watched every opportunity of annoying Richard's dominions. That monarch first attempted to carry open war into Normandy ; but as the French nobility refused to follow him in an invasion of a state which they had sworn to protect, and as the pope, who was the general guardian of all princes that had taken the cross, threatened him with ecclesiastical censures, he desisted from his enterprise, and employed against England the expedient of secret policy and intrigue. He debauched prince John from his allegiance ; promised him his sister Alice in marriage ; offered to give him possession of all Richard's transmarine dominions ; and had not the authority of queen Eleanor, and the menaces of the English council, prevailed over the inclinations of that turbulent prince, he was ready to have crossed the seas, and to have put in execution his criminal enterprises.

THE KING'S HEROIC ACTIONS IN PALESTINE. 1192.

THE jealousy of Philip was every moment excited by the glory which the great actions of Richard were gaining him in the East, and which, being compared to his own desertion of that popular cause, threw a double lustre on his rival. His envy, therefore, prompted him to obscure that fame which he had not equalled; and he embraced every pretence of throwing the most violent and most improbable calumnies on the king of England. There was a petty prince in Asia, commonly called *The old man of the mountain*, who had acquired such an ascendant over his fanatical subjects, that they paid the most implicit deference to his commands; esteemed assassination meritorious, when sanctified by his mandate; courted danger, and even certain death, in the execution of his orders; and fancied, that when they sacrificed their lives for his sake, the highest joys of paradise were the infallible reward of their devoted obedience^y. It was the custom of this prince, when he imagined himself injured, to dispatch secretly some of his subjects against the aggressor, to charge them with the execution of his revenge, to instruct them in every art of disguising their purpose; and no precaution was sufficient to

^y W. Heming. p. 532. Brompton, p. 1243.

guard any man, however powerful, against the attempts of those subtle and determined ruffians. The greatest monarchs stood in awe of this prince of the Assassins (for that was the name of his people; whence the word has passed into most European languages), and it was the highest indiscretion in Conrade marquis of Montferrat to offend and affront him. The inhabitants of Tyre, who were governed by that nobleman, had put to death some of this dangerous people: the prince demanded satisfaction; for, as he piqued himself on never beginning any offence^a, he had his regular and established formalities in requiring atonement: Conrade treated his messengers with disdain: the prince issued the fatal orders: two of his subjects, who had insinuated themselves in disguise among Conrade's guards, openly, in the streets of Sidon, wounded him mortally; and when they were seized and put to the most cruel tortures, they triumphed amidst their agonies, and rejoiced that they had been destined by Heaven to suffer in so just and meritorious a cause.

Every one in Palestine knew from what hand the blow came, Richard was entirely free from suspicion. Though that monarch had formerly maintained the cause of Lusignan against Conrade, he had become sensible of the bad effects attending those dissensions, and had voluntarily conferred on the former the kingdom of Cyprus,

^a Rymer, vol. i. p. 71.

on condition that he should resign to his rival all pretensions to the crown of Jerusalem^a. Conrade himself, with his dying breath, had recommended his widow to the protection of Richard^b; the prince of the Assassins avowed the action in a formal narrative which he sent to Europe^c; yet on this foundation the king of France thought fit to build the most egregious calumnies, and to impute to Richard the murder of the marquis of Montferrat, whose elevation he had once openly opposed. He filled all Europe with exclamations against the crime; appointed a guard for his own person, in order to defend himself against a like attempt^d; and endeavoured, by these shallow artifices, to cover the infamy of attacking the dominions of a prince, whom he himself had deserted, and who was engaged with so much glory in a war, universally acknowledged to be the common cause of Christendom.

But Richard's heroic actions in Palestine were the best apology for his conduct. The Christian adventurers under his command determined, on opening the campaign, to attempt the siege of Ascalon, in order to prepare the way for that of Jerusalem; and they marched along the sea-coast with that intention. Saladin purposed to intercept their passage; and he placed himself on the road with an army amounting to 300,000 combatants.

^a Vinisauf, p. 391.

^b Brompton, p. 1243.

^c Rymer, vol. i. p. 71. Trivet, p. 124. W. Heming, p. 544. Diceto, p. 680.

^d W. Heming, p. 532. Brompton, p. 1245.

On this occasion was fought one of the greatest battles of that age; and the most celebrated for the military genius of the commanders, for the number and valour of the troops, and for the great variety of events which attended it. Both the right wing of the Christians, commanded by d'Avesnes, and the left, conducted by the duke of Burgundy, were, in the beginning of the day, broken and defeated; when Richard, who led on the main body, restored the battle; attacked the enemy with intrepidity and presence of mind; performed the part both of a consummate general and gallant soldier; and not only gave his two wings leisure to recover from their confusion, but obtained a complete victory over the Saracens, of whom forty thousand are said to have perished in the field*. Ascalon soon after fell into the hands of the Christians: other sieges were carried on with equal success: Richard was even able to advance within sight of Jerusalem, the object of his enterprise; when he had the mortification to find, that he must abandon all hopes of immediate success, and must put a stop to his career of victory. The crusaders, animated with an enthusiastic ardour for the holy wars, broke at first through all regards to safety or interest in the prosecution of their purpose; and trusting to the immediate assistance of Heaven, set nothing

* Hoveden, p. 698. Bened. Abb. p. 677. Diceto, p. 661. Brompton, p. 1214.

before their eyes but fame and victory in this world, and a crown of glory in the next. But long absence from home, fatigue, disease, want, and the variety of incidents which naturally attend war, had gradually abated that fury, which nothing was able directly to withstand; and every one, except the king of England, expressed a desire of speedily returning into Europe. The Germans and the Italians declared their resolution of desisting from the enterprise: the French were still more obstinate in this purpose: the duke of Burgundy, in order to pay court to Philip, took all opportunities of mortifying and opposing Richard^f: and there appeared an absolute necessity of abandoning for the present all hopes of farther conquest, and of securing the acquisitions of the Christians by an accommodation with Saladin. Richard, therefore, concluded a truce with that monarch, and stipulated that Acre, Joppa, and other sea-port towns of Palestine, should remain in the hands of the Christians, and that every one of that religion should have liberty to perform his pilgrimage to Jerusalem unmolested. This truce was concluded for three years, three months, three weeks, three days, and three hours; a magical number, which had probably been devised by the Europeans, and which was suggested by a superstition well suited to the object of the war.

^f Vinisauf, p. 380.

The liberty, in which Saladin indulged the Christians to perform their pilgrimages to Jerusalem, was an easy sacrifice on his part; and the furious wars which he waged in defence of the barren territory of Judea, were not with him, as with the European adventurers, the result of superstition, but of policy. The advantage indeed of science, moderation, humanity, was at that time entirely on the side of the Saracens; and this gallant emperor, in particular, displayed, during the course of the war, a spirit and generosity, which even his bigotted enemies were obliged to acknowledge and admire. Richard, equally martial and brave, carried with him more of the barbarian character; and was guilty of acts of ferocity, which threw a stain on his celebrated victories. When Saladin refused to ratify the capitulation of Acre, the king of England ordered all his prisoners, to the number of five thousand, to be butchered; and the Saracens found themselves obliged to retaliate upon the Christians by a like cruelty^g. Saladin died at Damascus soon after concluding this truce with the princes of the crusade: it is memorable, that before he expired, he ordered his winding-sheet to be carried as a standard through every street of the city; while a crier went before, and proclaimed with a loud voice, *This is all that remains to the mighty Saladin, the conqueror of the East.*

^g Hoveden, p. 697. Bened. Abb. p. 673. M. Paris, p. 115. Vinisauf, p. 346. W. Heming. p. 531.

By his last will he ordered charities to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or Mahometan.

THE KING'S RETURN FROM PALESTINE.

THERE remained after the truce, no business of importance to detain Richard in Palestine; and the intelligence which he received, concerning the intrigues of his brother John, and those of the king of France, made him sensible, that his presence was necessary in Europe. As he dared not to pass through France, he sailed to the Adriatic; and being shipwrecked near Aquileia, he put on the disguise of a pilgrim, with a purpose of taking his journey secretly through Germany. Pursued by the governor of Istria, he was forced out of the direct road to England, and was obliged to pass by Vienna; where his expences and liberalities betrayed the monarch in the habit of the pilgrim; and he was arrested by orders of Leopold duke of Austria. This prince had served under Richard at the siege of Acre; but being disgusted by some insult of that haughty monarch, he was so ungenerous as to seize the present opportunity of gratifying at once his avarice and revenge; and he threw the king into prison. The emperor Henry VI. who also considered Richard as an enemy, on account of the alliance contracted by him with Tancred king of Sicily, dispatched

messengers to the duke of Austria, required the royal captive to be delivered to him, and stipulated a large sum of money as a reward for this service. Thus the king of England, who had filled the whole world with his renown, found himself, during the most critical state of his affairs, confined in a dungeon, and loaded with irons, in the heart of Germany^h, and entirely at the mercy of his enemies, the basest and most sordid of mankind.

The English council was astonished on receiving this fatal intelligence; and foresaw all the dangerous consequences which might naturally arise from that event. The queen-dowager wrote reiterated letters to pope Celestine, exclaiming against the injury which her son had sustained; representing the impiety of detaining in prison the most illustrious prince that had yet carried the banners of Christ into the Holy Land; claiming the protection of the apostolic see, which was due even to the meanest of those adventurers; and upbraiding the pope, that, in a cause where justice, religion, and the dignity of the church, were so much concerned, a cause which it might well befit his holiness himself to support by taking in person a journey to Germany, the spiritual thunders should so long be suspended over those sacrilegious offendersⁱ. The zeal of Celestine

^h Chron. T. Wykes, 35.

ⁱ Rymer, vol. i. p. 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, &c.

corresponded not to the impatience of the queen-mother; and the regency of England were, for a long time, left to struggle alone with all their domestic and foreign enemies.

WAR WITH FRANCE. 1193.

THE king of France, quickly informed of Richard's confinement by a message from the emperor^k, prepared himself to take advantage of the incident; and he employed every means of force and intrigue, of war and negotiation, against the dominions and the person of his unfortunate rival. He revived the calumny of Richard's assassinating the marquis of Montferrat; and by that absurd pretence he induced his barons to violate their oaths, by which they had engaged that, during the crusade, they never would, on any account, attack the dominions of the king of England. He made the emperor the largest offers, if he would deliver into his hands the royal prisoner, or at least detain him in perpetual captivity: he even formed an alliance by marriage with the king of Denmark, desired that the ancient Danish claim to the crown of England should be transferred to him, and solicited a supply of shipping to maintain it. But the most successful of Philip's negotiations was with prince John, who, forget-

^k Rymer, vol. i. p. 70.

ting every tye to his brother, his sovereign, and his benefactor, thought of nothing but how to make his own advantage of the public calamities. That traitor, on the first invitation from the court of France, suddenly went abroad, had a conference with Philip, and made a treaty, of which the object was the perpetual ruin of his unhappy brother. He stipulated to deliver into Philip's hands a great part of Normandy¹; he received, in return, the investiture of all Richard's transmarine dominions; and it is reported by several historians, that he even did homage to the French king for the crown of England.

In consequence of this treaty, Philip invaded Normandy; and by the treachery of John's emissaries, made himself master, without opposition, of many fortresses, Neuf-chatel, Neaufle, Gisors, Pacey, Ivreé: he subdued the counties of Eu and Aumale; and advancing to form the siege of Roüen, he threatened to put all the inhabitants to the sword if they dared to make resistance. Happily, Robert earl of Leicester appeared in that critical moment; a gallant nobleman, who had acquired great honour during the crusade, and who, being more fortunate than his master in finding his passage homewards, took on him the command in Roüen, and exerted himself, by his exhortations and example, to infuse courage into the dismayed Normans. Philip was repulsed in

¹ Rymer, vol. i. p. 65.

every attack ; the time of service from his vassals expired ; and he consented to a truce with the English regency, received in return the promise of 20,000 marks, and had four castles put into his hands, as security for the payment ^m.

Prince John, who, with a view of increasing the general confusion. went over to England, was still less successful in his enterprises. He was only able to make himself master of the castles of Windsor and Wallingford ; but when he arrived in London, and claimed the kingdom as heir to his brother, of whose death he pretended to have received certain intelligence, he was rejected by all the barons, and measures were taken to oppose and subdue him ⁿ. The justiciaries, supported by the general affection of the people, provided so well for the defence of the kingdom, that John was obliged, after some fruitless efforts, to conclude a truce with them ; and before its expiration, he thought it prudent to return to France, where he openly avowed his alliance with Philip ^o.

Meanwhile the high spirit of Richard suffered in Germany every kind of insult and indignity. The French ambassadors, in their master's name, renounced him as a vassal to the crown of France, and declared all his fiefs to be forfeited to his liege-lord. The Emperor, that he might render him more impatient for the recovery of his liberty,

^m Hoveden, p. 730, 731. Rymer, vol. i. p. 81.

ⁿ Hoveden, p. 724.

^o W. Heming. p. 536.

and make him submit to the payment of a larger ransom, treated him with the greatest severity, and reduced him to a condition worse than that of the meanest malefactor. He was even produced before the diet of the empire at Worms, and accused by Henry of many crimes and misdemeanors: of making an alliance with Tancred, the usurper of Sicily; of turning the arms of the crusade against a Christian prince, and subduing Cyprus; of affronting the duke of Austria before Acre; of obstructing the progress of the Christian arms by his quarrels with the king of France; of assassinating Conrade marquis of Montferrat; and of concluding a truce with Saladin, and leaving Jerusalem in the hands of the Saracen emperor^P. Richard, whose spirit was not broken by his misfortunes, and whose genius was rather roused by these frivolous or scandalous imputations; after premising that his dignity exempted him from answering before any jurisdiction, except that of Heaven; yet condescended, for the sake of his reputation, to justify his conduct before that great assembly. He observed, that he had no hand in Tancred's elevation, and only concluded a treaty with a prince whom he found in possession of the throne: that the king, or rather tyrant of Cyprus, had provoked his indignation by the most ungenerous and unjust proceedings; and though he chastised this aggressor, he had not retarded a

^P M. Paris, p. 121. W. Heming. p. 536.

moment the progress of his chief enterprise: that if he had at any time been wanting in civility to the duke of Austria, he had already been sufficiently punished for that sally of passion; and it better became men, embarked together in so holy a cause, to forgive each other's infirmities, than to pursue a slight offence with such unrelenting vengeance: that it had sufficiently appeared by the event, whether the king of France or he were most zealous for the conquest of the Holy Land, and were most likely to sacrifice private passions and animosities to that great object: that if the whole tenor of his life had not shewn him incapable of a base assassination, and justified him from that imputation in the eyes of his very enemies, it was in vain for him, at present, to make his apology, or plead the many irrefragable arguments which he could produce in his own favour: and that, however he might regret the necessity, he was so far from being ashamed of his truce with Saladin, that he rather gloried in that event; and thought it extremely honourable, that, though abandoned by all the world, supported only by his own courage, and by the small remains of his national troops, he could yet obtain such conditions from the most powerful and most warlike emperor that the East had ever yet produced. Richard, after thus deigning to apologise for his conduct, burst out into indignation at the cruel treatment which he had met with; that he, the champion of the cross, still wearing that honourable badge, should,

after expending the blood and treasure of his subjects in the common cause of Christendom, be intercepted by Christian princes in his return to his own country, be thrown into a dungeon, be loaded with irons, be obliged to plead his cause, as if he were a subject and a malefactor; and, what he still more regretted, be thereby prevented from making preparations for a new crusade, which he had projected, after the expiration of the truce, and from redeeming the sepulchre of Christ, which had so long been profaned by the dominion of infidels. The spirit and eloquence of Richard made such impression on the German princes, that they exclaimed loudly against the conduct of the emperor; the pope threatened him with excommunication; and Henry, who had hearkened to the proposals of the king of France and prince John, found that it would be impracticable for him to execute his and their base purposes, or to detain the king of England any longer in captivity. He therefore concluded with him a treaty for his ransom, and agreed to restore him to his freedom for the sum of 150,000 marks, about 300,000 pounds of our present money; of which 100,000 marks were to be paid before he received his liberty, and sixty-seven hostages delivered for the remainder^a. The emperor, as if to gloss over the infamy of this transaction, made at the same time a present to Richard of

^a Rymer, vol. i. p. 84.

the kingdom of Arles, comprehending Provence, Dauphiny, Narbonne, and other states, over which the empire had some antiquated claims; a present which the king very wisely neglected.

The captivity of the superior lord was one of the cases provided for by the feudal tenures; and all the vassals were in that event obliged to give an aid for his ransom. Twenty shillings were therefore levied on each knight's fee in England; but as this money came in slowly, and was not sufficient for the intended purpose, the voluntary zeal of the people readily supplied the deficiency. The churches and monasteries melted down their plate, to the amount of 30,000 marks; the bishops, abbots, and nobles, paid a fourth of their yearly rent; the parochial clergy contributed a tenth of their tithes: and the requisite sum being thus collected, queen Eleanor, and Walter archbishop of Rouën, set out with it for Germany; paid the money to the emperor and the duke of Austria at Mentz; delivered them hostages for the remainder; and freed Richard from captivity. His escape was very critical. Henry had been detected in the assassination of the bishop of Liege, and in an attempt of a like nature on the duke of Louvaine; and finding himself extremely obnoxious to the German princes on account of these odious practices, he had determined to seek support from an alliance with the king of France; to detain Richard, the enemy of that prince, in perpetual captivity; to keep in his hands the money

which he had already received for his ransom; and to extort fresh sums from Philip and prince John, who were very liberal in their offers to him. He therefore gave orders that Richard should be pursued and arrested; but the king, making all imaginable haste, had already embarked at the mouth of the Schelde, and was out of sight of land, when the messengers of the emperor reached Antwerp.

KING'S RETURN TO ENGLAND,

MARCH 20.

THE joy of the English was extreme on the appearance of their monarch, who had suffered so many calamities, who had acquired so much glory, and who had spread the reputation of their name into the farthest East, whither their fame had never before been able to extend. He gave them, soon after his arrival, an opportunity of publicly displaying their exultation, by ordering himself to be crowned anew at Winchester; as if he intended, by that ceremony, to reinstate himself in his throne, and to wipe off the ignominy of his captivity. Their satisfaction was not damped, even when he declared his purpose of resuming all those exorbitant grants, which he had been necessitated to make before his departure for the Holy Land. The barons, also, in a great council, confiscated, on account of his treason, all prince

John's possessions in England ; and they assisted the king in reducing the fortresses which still remained in the hands of his brother's adherents^r. Richard, having settled every thing in England, passed over with an army into Normandy ; being impatient to make war on Philip, and to revenge himself for the many injuries which he had received from that monarch^s. As soon as Philip heard of the king's deliverance from captivity, he wrote to his confederate John, in these terms : *Take care of yourself : the devil is broken loose^t*.

WAR WITH FRANCE. 1194.

WHEN we consider such powerful and martial monarchs, inflamed with personal animosity against each other, enraged by mutual injuries, excited by rivalry, impelled by opposite interests, and instigated by the pride and violence of their own temper ; our curiosity is naturally raised, and we expect an obstinate and furious war, distinguished by the greatest events, and concluded by some remarkable catastrophe. Yet are the incidents, which attend those hostilities, so frivolous, that scarce any historian can entertain such a passion for military descriptions as to venture on a detail of them : a certain proof of the extreme weakness

^r Hoveden, p. 737. Ann. Waverl. p. 165. W. Heming. p. 540.

^s Hoveden, p. 740.

^t Ibid. p. 739.

of princes in those ages, and of the little authority they possessed over their refractory vassals ! The whole amount of the exploits on both sides is, the taking of a castle, the surprise of a straggling party, a rencounter of horse, which resembles more a rout than a battle. Richard obliged Philip to raise the siege of Verneuil ; he took Loches, a small town in Anjou ; he made himself master of Beaumont, and some other places of little consequence ; and after these trivial exploits, the two kings began already to hold conferences for an accommodation. Philip insisted that, if a general peace were concluded, the barons on each side should, for the future, be prohibited from carrying on private wars against each other : but Richard replied, that this was a right claimed by his vassals, and he could not debar them from it. After this fruitless negotiation, there ensued an action between the French and English cavalry at Fretteval, in which the former were routed, and the king of France's cartulary and records, which commonly at that time attended his person, were taken. But this victory leading to no important advantages, a truce for a year was at last, from mutual weakness, concluded between the two monarchs.

During this war prince John deserted from Philip, threw himself at his brother's feet, craved pardon for his offences, and by the intercession of queen Eleanor was received into favour. *I forgive him*, said the king, *and hope I shall as easily forget his injuries, as he will my pardon.* John was in-

capable even of returning to his duty without committing a baseness. Before he left Philip's party, he invited to dinner all the officers of the garrison which that prince had placed in the citadel of Evreux; he massacred them during the entertainment; fell, with the assistance of the townsmen, on the garrison, whom he put to the sword; and then delivered up the place to his brother.

The king of France was the great object of Richard's resentment and animosity: the conduct of John, as well as that of the emperor and duke of Austria, had been so base, and was exposed to such general odium and reproach, that the king deemed himself sufficiently revenged for their injuries; and he seems never to have entertained any project of vengeance against any of them. The duke of Austria, about this time, having crushed his leg by the fall of his horse at a tournament, was thrown into a fever; and being struck, on the approaches of death, with remorse for his injustice to Richard, he ordered, by will, all the English hostages in his hands to be set at liberty, and the remainder of the debt due to him to be remitted: his son, who seemed inclined to disobey these orders, was constrained by his ecclesiastics to execute them^u. The emperor also made advances for Richard's friendship, and offered to give him a discharge of all the debt not yet

^u Rymer, vol. i. p. 88, 102.

paid to him, provided he would enter into an offensive alliance against the king of France; a proposal which was very acceptable to Richard, and was greedily embraced by him. The treaty with the emperor took no effect; but it served to rekindle the war between France and England before the expiration of the truce. This war was not distinguished by any more remarkable incidents than the foregoing. After mutually ravaging the open country, and taking a few insignificant castles, the two kings concluded a peace at Louviers, and made an exchange of some territories with each other^w. Their inability to wage war occasioned the peace: their mutual antipathy engaged them again in war before two months expired. Richard imagined, that he had now found an opportunity of gaining great advantages over his rival, by forming an alliance with the counts of Flanders, Toulouse, Boulogne, Champagne, and other considerable vassals of the crown of France^x. But he soon experienced the insincerity of those princes; and was not able to make any impression on that kingdom, while governed by a monarch of so much vigour and activity as Philip. The most remarkable incident of this war was the taking prisoner in battle the bishop of Beauvais, a martial prelate, who was of the family of Dreux, and a near relation of the French king's. Richard, who hated that bishop,

^w Rymer, p. 91. ^x W. Heming. p. 549. Brompton, p. 1273. Rymer, vol. i. p. 94.

threw him into prison, and loaded him with irons; and when the pope demanded his liberty, and claimed him as his son, the king sent to his holiness the coat of mail which the prelate had worn in battle, and which was all besmeared with blood: and he replied to him, in terms employed by Jacob's sons to that patriarch, *This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no*^y. This new war between England and France, though carried on with such animosity that both kings frequently put out the eyes of their prisoners, was soon finished by a truce of five years; and immediately after signing this treaty, the kings were ready, on some new offence, to break out again into hostilities; when the mediation of the cardinal of St. Mary, the Pope's legate, accommodated the difference^z. This prelate even engaged the princes to commence a treaty for a more durable peace; but the death of Richard put an end to the negotiation.

Vidomer, viscount of Limoges, a vassal of the king's, had found a treasure, of which he sent part to that prince as a present. Richard, as superior lord, claimed the whole; and at the head of some Brabançons, besieged the viscount in the castle of Chalos, near Limoges, in order to make him comply with his demand^a. The garrison offered to surrender; but the king replied, that,

^y Genesis, chap. xxxvii. ver. 32. M. Paris, p. 128. Brompton, p. 1273. ^z Rymer, vol. i. p. 109, 110.

^a Hoveden, p. 791. Knyghton, p. 2413.

since he had taken the pains to come thither and besiege the place in person, he would take it by force, and would hang every one of them. The same day Richard, accompanied by Marcadée, leader of his Brabançons, approached the castle in order to survey it; when one Bertrand de Gourdon, an archer, took aim at him, and pierced his shoulder with an arrow. The king, however, gave orders for the assault, took the place, and hanged all the garrison, except Gourdon, who had wounded him, and whom he reserved for a more deliberate and more cruel execution^b.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF THE KING.

APRIL 6,

THE wound was not in itself dangerous; but the unskilfulness of the surgeon made it mortal: he so rankled Richard's shoulder in pulling out the arrow, that a gangrene ensued; and that prince was now sensible that his life was drawing towards a period. He sent for Gourdon, and asked him, *Wretch, what have I ever done to you, to oblige you to seek my life?—What have you done to me?* replied coolly the prisoner: *you killed with your own hands my father and my two brothers; and you intended to have hanged myself: I am now in your power, and you may take revenge, by inflicting on me the most severe torments: but I shall endure*

^b Ibid.

them all with pleasure, provided I can think that I have been so happy as to rid the world of such a nuisance°. Richard, struck with the reasonableness of this reply, and humbled by the near approach of death, ordered Gourdon to be set at liberty, and a sum of money to be given him; but Marcadée, unknown to him, seized the unhappy man, flayed him alive, and then hanged him. Richard died in the tenth year of his reign, and the forty-second of his age; and he left no issue behind him.

The most shining part of this prince's character are his military talents. No man, even in that romantic age, carried personal courage and intrepidity to a greater height; and this quality gained him the appellation of the lion-hearted, *cœur de lion*. He passionately loved glory, chiefly military glory; and as his conduct in the field was not inferior to his valour, he seems to have possessed every talent necessary for acquiring it. His resentments also were high; his pride unconquerable; and his subjects, as well as his neighbours, had therefore reason to apprehend, from the continuance of his reign, a perpetual scene of blood and violence. Of an impetuous and vehement spirit, he was distinguished by all the good, as well as the bad qualities, incident to that character: he was open, frank, generous, sincere, and brave; he was revengeful, domineering, ambitious,

° Hoveden, p. 791. Brompton, p. 1277. Knyghton, p. 2413.

haughty, and cruel; and was thus better calculated to dazzle men by the splendour of his enterprizes, than either to promote their happiness or his own grandeur, by a sound and well-regulated policy. As military talents make great impression on the people, he seems to have been much beloved by his English subjects; and he is remarked to have been the first prince of the Norman line that bore any sincere regard to them. He passed however only four months of his reign in that kingdom: the crusade employed him near three years; he was detained about fourteen months in captivity; the rest of his reign was spent either in war, or preparations for war, against France; and he was so pleased with the fame which he had acquired in the East, that he determined, notwithstanding his past misfortunes, to have farther exhausted his kingdom, and to have exposed himself to new hazards, by conducting another expedition against the infidels.

MISCELLANEOUS TRANSACTIONS OF THIS REIGN.

THOUGH the English pleased themselves with the glory which the king's martial genius procured them, his reign was very oppressive and somewhat arbitrary, by the high taxes which he levied on them, and often without consent of the states or great-council. In the ninth year of his reign, he

levied five shillings on each hyde of land ; and because the clergy refused to contribute their share, he put them out of the protection of law, and ordered the civil courts to give them no sentence for any debts which they might claim^d. Twice in his reign he ordered all his charters to be sealed anew, and the parties to pay fees for the renewal^e. It is said that Hubert, his justiciary, sent him over to France, in the space of two years, no less a sum than 1,100,000 marks, besides bearing all the charges of the government in England. But this account is quite incredible, unless we suppose that Richard made a thorough dilapidation of the demesnes of the crown, which it is not likely he could do with any advantage after his former resumption of all grants. A king, who possessed such a revenue, could never have endured fourteen months captivity, for not paying 150,000 marks to the emperor, and be obliged at last to have hostages for a third of the sum. The prices of commodities in this reign are also a certain proof that no such enormous sum could be levied on the people. A hyde of land, or about a hundred and twenty acres, was commonly let at twenty shillings a year, money of that time. As there were 243,600 hydes in England, it is easy to compute the amount of all the landed rents of the kingdom. The general and stated price of an ox was four shillings ; of a labouring horse the same ;

^d Hoveden, p. 743. Tyrrel, vol. ii. p. 563.

^e Pryne's Chronol. Vindic. tom. i. p. 1133.

of a sow, one shilling; of a sheep with fine wool, ten pence; with coarse wool, six pence¹. These commodities seem not to have advanced in their prices since the conquest*, and to have still been ten times cheaper than at present.

Richard renewed the severe laws against transgressors in his forests, whom he punished by castration, and putting out their eyes, as in the reign of his great-grandfather. He established by law one weight and measure throughout his kingdom²: a useful institution, which the mercenary disposition and necessities of his successor engaged him to dispense with for money.

The disorders in London, derived from its bad police, had risen to a great height during this reign; and in the year 1196, there seemed to be formed so regular a conspiracy among the numerous malefactors, as threatened the city with destruction. There was one William Fitz-Osbert, commonly called *Longbeard*, a lawyer, who had rendered himself extremely popular among the lower rank of citizens; and, by defending them on all occasions, had acquired the appellation of the advocate or saviour of the poor. He exerted his authority, by injuring and insulting the more substantial citizens, with whom he lived in a state of hostility, and who were every moment exposed to the most outrageous violences from him and

¹ Hoveden, p. 745.

* See note [A] vol. x.

² M. Paris, p. 109, 134. Trivet, p. 127. Ann. Waverl. p. 165. Hoveden, p. 774.

his licentious emissaries. Murders were daily committed in the streets ; houses were broken open and pillaged in day light ; and it is pretended, that no less than fifty-two thousand persons had entered into an association, by which they bound themselves to obey all the orders of this dangerous ruffian. Archbishop Hubert, who was then chief justiciary, summoned him before the council to answer for his conduct ; but he came so well attended, that no one durst accuse him, or give evidence against him ; and the primate, finding the impotence of law, contented himself with exacting from the citizens hostages for their good behaviour. He kept, however, a watchful eye on Fitz-Osbert ; and seizing a favourable opportunity, attempted to commit him to custody ; but the criminal, murdering one of the public officers, escaped with his concubine to the church of St. Mary le Bow, where he defended himself by force of arms. He was at last forced from his retreat, condemned, and executed amidst the regrets of the populace, who were so devoted to his memory, that they stole his gibbet, paid the same veneration to it as to the cross, and were equally zealous in propagating and attesting reports of the miracles wrought by it^h. But though the sectaries of this superstition were punished by the justiciaryⁱ, it received so little encouragement from the established clergy, whose property

^h Hoveden, p. 765. Diceto, p. 691. Newbrig. p. 492, 493.

ⁱ Gervase, p. 1551.

was endangered by such seditious practices, that it suddenly sunk and vanished.

It was during the crusades, that the custom of using coats of arms was first introduced into Europe. The knights, cased up in armour, had no way to make themselves be known and distinguished in battle, but by the devices on their shields; and these were gradually adopted by their posterity and families, who were proud of the pious and military enterprizes of their ancestors.

King Richard was a passionate lover of poetry: there even remain some poetical works of his composition: and he bears a rank among the Provençal poets or *Trobadores*, who were the first of the modern Europeans that distinguished themselves by attempts of that nature.



John.



CHAP. XII. p. 201.

The king coming in a boat, during the night-time, to that place, commanded Arthur to be brought forth to him. The young prince, aware of his danger, and now more subdued by the continuance of his misfortunes, and by the approach of death, threw himself on his knees before his uncle, and begged for mercy : but the barbarous tyrant, making no reply, stabbed him with his own hands ; and fastening a stone to the dead body, threw it into the Seine.

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN.

Accession of the King His Marriage War with France Murder of Arthur Duke of Brittany The King expelled the French Provinces The King's Quarrel with the Court of Rome Cardinal Langton appointed Archbishop of Canterbury Interdict of the Kingdom Excommunication of the King The King's Submission to the Pope Discontents of the Barons Insurrection of the Barons Magna Charta Renewal of the Civil Wars Prince Lewis called over Death and Character of the King.

ACCESSION OF THE KING. 1199.

THE noble and free genius of the ancients, which made the government of a single person be always regarded as a species of tyranny and usurpation, and kept them from forming any conception of a legal and regular monarchy, had rendered them entirely ignorant both of the rights of *primogeniture* and a *representation* in succession; inventions so necessary for preserving order in the lines of princes, for obviating the evils of civil discord and of usurpation, and for begetting moderation in that species of government, by giving security to the ruling sovereign. These innova-

tions arose from the feudal law; which, first introducing the right of primogeniture, made such a distinction between the families of the elder and younger brothers, that the son of the former was thought entitled to succeed to his grandfather, preferably to his uncles, though nearer allied to the deceased monarch. But though this progress of ideas was natural, it was gradual. In the age of which we treat, the practice of representation was indeed introduced, but not thoroughly established; and the minds of men fluctuated between opposite principles. Richard, when he entered on the holy war, declared his nephew, Arthur duke of Brittany, his successor; and by a formal deed, he set aside, in his favour, the title of his brother John, who was younger than Geoffrey, the father of that prince^k. But John so little acquiesced in that destination, that when he gained the ascendant in the English ministry, by expelling Longchamp, the chancellor, and great justiciary, he engaged all the English barons to swear, that they would maintain his right of succession; and Richard, on his return, took no steps towards restoring or securing the order which he had at first established. He was even careful, by his last will, to declare his brother John heir to all his dominions^l; whether, that he now thought Arthur, who was only twelve years

^k Hoveden, p. 677. M. Paris, p. 112. Chron. de Dunst. p. 43. Rymer, vol. i. p. 66, 68. Bened. Abb. p. 619.

^l Hoveden, p. 791. Trivet, p. 138.

of age, incapable of asserting his claim against John's faction, or was influenced by Eleanor, the queen-mother, who hated Constantia, mother of the young duke, and who dreaded the credit which that princess would naturally acquire if her son should mount the throne. The authority of a testament was great in that age, even where the succession of a kingdom was concerned; and John had reason to hope that this title, joined to his plausible right in other respects, would ensure him the succession. But the idea of representation seems to have made, at this time, greater progress in France than in England: the barons of the transmarine provinces, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, immediately declared in favour of Arthur's title, and applied for assistance to the French monarch as their superior lord. Philip, who desired only an occasion to embarrass John, and dismember his dominions, embraced the cause of the young duke of Brittany, took him under his protection, and sent him to Paris to be educated, along with his own son Lewis^m. In this emergence, John hastened to establish his authority in the chief members of the monarchy; and after sending Eleanor into Poictou and Guienne, where her right was incontestible, and was readily acknowledged, he hurried to Roüen, and having secured the dutchy of Normandy, he passed over, without loss of time, to England. Hubert

^m Hoveden, p. 792. M. Paris, p. 137. M. West. p. 263. Knyghton, p. 2414.

archbishop of Canterbury, William Mareschal, earl of Strigul, who also passes by the name of earl of Pembroke, and Geoffrey Fitz-Peter the justiciary, the three most favoured ministers of the late king, were already engaged on his sideⁿ; and the submission or acquiescence of all the other barons put him, without opposition, in possession of the throne.

The king soon returned to France, in order to conduct the war against Philip, and to recover the revolted provinces from his nephew Arthur. The alliances which Richard had formed with the earl of Flanders^o, and other potent French princes, though they had not been very effectual, still subsisted, and enabled John to defend himself against all the efforts of his enemy. In an action between the French and Flemings, the elect bishop of Cambray was taken prisoner by the former; and when the cardinal of Capua claimed his liberty, Philip, instead of complying, reproached him with the weak efforts which he had employed in favour of the bishop of Beauvais, who was in a like condition. The legate, to shew his impartiality, laid at the same time the kingdom of France and the dutchy of Normandy under an interdict; and the two kings found themselves obliged to make an exchange of these military prelates.

Nothing enabled the king to bring this war to a happy issue so much as the selfish intriguing

ⁿ Hoveden, p. 793. M. Paris, p. 137.

^o Rymer, vol. i. p. 114. Hoveden, p. 794. M. Paris, p. 138.

character of Philip, who acted in the provinces that had declared for Arthur, without any regard to the interests of that prince. Constantia, seized with a violent jealousy that he intended to usurp the entire dominion of them^p, found means to carry off her son secretly from Paris : she put him into the hands of his uncle ; restored the provinces which had adhered to the young prince ; and made him do homage for the dutchy of Brittany, which was regarded as a rere-fief of Normandy. From this incident, Philip saw that he could not hope to make any progress against John ; and being threatened with an interdict on account of his irregular divorce from Ingelburga, the Danish princess whom he had espoused, he became desirous of concluding a peace with England. After some fruitless conferences, the terms were at last adjusted ; and the two monarchs seemed in this treaty to have an intention, besides ending the present quarrel, of preventing all future causes of discord, and of obviating every controversy which could [hereafter arise between them. They adjusted the limits of all their territories ; mutually secured the interests of their vassals ; and, to render the union more durable, John gave his niece, Blanche of Castile, in marriage to prince Lewis, Philip's eldest son, and with her the baronies of Issoudun and Graçai, and other fiefs in Berri. Nine barons of the king of England, and as many

^p Hoveden, p. 795.

of the king of France, were guarantees of this treaty; and all of them swore, that, if the sovereign violated any article of it, they would declare themselves against him, and embrace the cause of the injured monarch^a.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE. 1200.

JOHN, now secure, as he imagined, on the side of France, indulged his passion for Isabella, the daughter and heir of Aymar Tailleffer count of Angouleme, a lady with whom he had become much enamoured. His queen, the heiress of the family of Gloucester, was still alive: Isabella was married to the count de la Marche, and was already consigned to the care of that nobleman; though, by reason of her tender years, the marriage had not been consummated. The passion of John made him overlook all these obstacles: he persuaded the count of Angouleme to carry off his daughter from her husband; and having, on some pretence or other, procured a divorce from his own wife, he espoused Isabella; regardless both of the menaces of the pope, who exclaimed against these irregular proceedings, and of the resentment of the injured count, who soon found means of punishing his powerful and insolent rival.

^a Norman Duchesnii, p. 1055. Rymer, vol. i. p. 117, 118, 119. Hoveden, p. 814. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 47.

John had not the art of attaching his barons either by affection or by fear. The count de la Marche, and his brother the count d'Eu, taking advantage of the general discontent against him, excited commotions in Poictou and Normandy; and obliged the king to have recourse to arms, in order to suppress the insurrection of his vassals. He summoned together the barons of England, and required them to pass the sea under his standard, and to quell the rebels: he found that he possessed as little authority in that kingdom as in his transmarine provinces. The English barons unanimously replied, that they would not attend him on this expedition, unless he would promise to restore and preserve their privileges^r: the first symptom of a regular association and plan of liberty among those noblemen! but affairs were not yet fully ripe for the revolution projected. John, by menacing the barons, broke the concert; and both engaged many of them to follow him into Normandy, and obliged the rest, who staid behind, to pay him a scutage of two marks on each knight's fee, as the price of their exemption from the service.

The force which John carried abroad with him, and that which joined him in Normandy, rendered him much superior to his malcontent barons; and so much the more as Philip did not publicly give them any countenance, and seemed as yet determined to persevere steadily in the alliance

^r Annal. Burton, p. 262.

which he had contracted with England. But the king, elated with his superiority, advanced claims which gave an universal alarm to his vassals, and diffused still wider the general discontent. As the jurisprudence of those times required, that the causes in the lord's court should chiefly be decided by duel, he carried along with him certain bravos, whom he retained as champions, and whom he destined to fight with his barons, in order to determine any controversy which he might raise against them^s. The count de la Marche, and other noblemen, regarded this proceeding as an affront, as well as an injury; and declared, that they would never draw their sword against men of such inferior quality. The king menaced them with vengeance; but he had not vigour to employ against them the force in his hands, or to prosecute the injustice, by crushing entirely the nobles who opposed it.

WAR WITH FRANCE. 1201.

THIS government, equally feeble and violent, gave the injured barons courage as well as inclination to carry farther their opposition: they appealed to the king of France; complained of the denial of justice in John's court; demanded redress from him as their superior lord; and entreated him to employ his authority, and prevent

^s Annal. Burton, p. 262.

their final ruin and oppression. Philip perceived his advantage, opened his mind to great projects, interposed in behalf of the French barons, and began to talk in a high and menacing style to the king of England. John, who could not disavow Philip's authority, replied, that it belonged to himself first to grant them a trial by their peers in his own court; it was not till he failed in this duty, that he was answerable to his peers in the supreme court of the French king[†]; and he promised, by a fair and equitable judicature, to give satisfaction to his barons. When the nobles, in consequence of this engagement, demanded a safe-conduct, that they might attend his court, he at first refused it; upon the renewal of Philip's menaces, he promised to grant their demand; he violated this promise; fresh menaces extorted from him a promise to surrender to Philip the fortresses of Tillieres and Boutavant, as a security for performance; he again violated his engagement; his enemies, sensible both of his weakness and want of faith, combined still closer in the resolution of pushing him to extremities; and a new and powerful ally soon appeared to encourage them in their invasion of this odious and despicable government.

The young duke of Brittany who was now rising to man's estate, sensible of the dangerous character of his uncle, determined to seek both his security and elevation by an union with Philip

[†] Philipp. lib. vi.

and the malcontent barons. He joined the French army, which had begun hostilities against the king of England: he was received with great marks of distinction by Philip; was knighted by him; espoused his daughter Mary; and was invested not only in the dutchy of Brittany, but in the counties of Anjou and Maine, which he had formerly resigned to his uncle^u. Every attempt succeeded with the allies. Tillieres and Boutavant were taken by Philip, after making a feeble defence: Mortimar and Lyons fell into his hands almost without resistance. That prince next invested Gournai; and opening the sluices of a lake which lay in the neighbourhood, poured such a torrent of water into the place that the garrison deserted it, and the French monarch, without striking a blow, made himself master of that important fortress. The progress of the French arms was rapid, and promised more considerable success than usually in that age attended military enterprises. In answer to every advance which the king made towards peace, Philip still insisted, that he should resign all his transmarine dominions to his nephew, and rest contented with the kingdom of England; when an event happened, which seemed to turn the scales in favour of John, and to give him a decisive superiority over his enemies.

Young Arthur, fond of military renown, had broken into Poictou at the head of a small army;

^u Trivet, p. 142.

and passing near Mirabeau, he heard that his grandmother queen Eleanor, who had always opposed his interests, was lodged in that place, and was protected by a weak garrison and ruinous fortifications^w. He immediately determined to lay siege to the fortress, and make himself master of her person: but John, roused from his indolence by so pressing an occasion, collected an army of English and Brabançons, and advanced from Normandy with hasty marches to the relief of the queen-mother. He fell on Arthur's camp before that prince was aware of the danger; dispersed his army; took him prisoner, together with the count de la Marche, Geoffrey de Lusignan, and the most considerable of the revolted barons; and returned in triumph to Normandy^x. Philip, who was lying before Arques in that dutchy, raised the siege and retired, upon his approach^y. The greater part of the prisoners were sent over to England; but Arthur was shut up in the castle of Falaise.

MURDER OF ARTHUR DUKE OF BRITANNY.

1203.

THE king had here a conference with his nephew; represented to him the folly of his pretensions; and required him to renounce the French alliance, which had encouraged him to live in a

^w Ann. Waverl. p. 167. M. West. p. 264.

^x Ann. Marg. p. 213. M. West. p. 264. ^y M. West. p. 264.

state of enmity with all his family: but the brave, though imprudent youth, rendered more haughty from misfortunes, maintained the justice of his cause; asserted his claim, not only to the French provinces, but to the crown of England; and, in his turn, required the king to restore the son of his elder brother to the possession of his inheritance². John, sensible, from these symptoms of spirit, that the young prince, though now a prisoner, might hereafter prove a dangerous enemy, determined to prevent all future peril by dispatching his nephew; and Arthur was never more heard of. The circumstances which attended this deed of darkness were, no doubt, carefully concealed by the actors, and are variously related by historians: but the most probable account is as follows: the king, it is said, first proposed to William de la Bray, one of his servants, to dispatch Arthur; but William replied, that he was a gentleman, not a hangman; and he positively refused compliance. Another instrument of murder was found, and was dispatched with proper orders to Falaise; but Hubert de Bourg, chamberlain to the king, and constable of the castle, feigning that he himself would execute the king's mandate, sent back the assassin, spread the report that the young prince was dead, and publicly performed all the ceremonies of his interment: but finding that the Bretons vowed revenge for the murder, and that all the revolted barons perse-

² M. West. p. 264.

vered more obstinately in their rebellion, he thought it prudent to reveal the secret, and to inform the world that the duke of Brittany was still alive, and in his custody. This discovery proved fatal to the young prince: John first removed him to the castle of Rouën; and coming in a boat, during the night-time, to that place, commanded Arthur to be brought forth to him. The young prince, aware of his danger, and now more subdued by the continuance of his misfortunes, and by the approach of death, threw himself on his knees before his uncle, and begged for mercy: but the barbarous tyrant, making no reply, stabbed him with his own hands; and fastening a stone to the dead body, threw it into the Seine.

All men were struck with horror at this inhuman deed; and from that moment the king, detested by his subjects, retained a very precarious authority over both the people and the barons in his dominions. The Bretons, enraged at this disappointment in their fond hopes, waged implacable war against him; and fixing the succession of their government, put themselves in a posture to revenge the murder of their sovereign. John had got into his power his niece, Eleanor, sister to Arthur, commonly called *the Damsel of Brittany*; and carrying her over to England, detained her ever after in captivity^a: but the Bretons, in despair of recovering this princess, chose Alice for their sovereign; a younger daughter of

^a Trivet, p. 145. T. Wykes, p. 36. Ypod. Neust. p. 459.

Constantia, by her second marriage with Gui de Thouars; and they entrusted the government of the dutchy to that nobleman. The states of Brittany, meanwhile, carried their complaints before Philip as their liege lord, and demanded justice for the violence committed by John on the person of Arthur, so near a relation, who, notwithstanding the homage which he did to Normandy, was always regarded as one of the chief vassals of the crown. Philip received their application with pleasure; summoned John to stand a trial before him; and on his non-appearance passed sentence, with the concurrence of the peers, upon that prince; declared him guilty of felony and parricide; and adjudged him to forfeit to his superior lord all his seignories and fiefs in France^b.

THE KING EXPELLED FROM THE FRENCH PROVINCES.

THE king of France, whose ambitious and active spirit had been hitherto confined, either by the sound policy of Henry, or the martial genius of Richard, seeing now the opportunity favourable against this base and odious prince, embraced the project of expelling the English, or rather the English king, from France, and of annexing to the crown so many considerable fiefs, which, during several ages, had been dismembered from it.

^b W. Heming, p. 455. M. West, p. 264. Knyghton, p. 2420.

Many of the other great vassals, whose jealousy might have interposed, and have obstructed the execution of this project, were not at present in a situation to oppose it; and the rest either looked on with indifference, or gave their assistance to this dangerous aggrandizement of their superior lord. The earls of Flanders and Blois were engaged in the holy war: the count of Champagne was an infant, and under the guardianship of Philip: the dutchy of Brittany, enraged at the murder of their prince, vigorously promoted all his measures: and the general defection of John's vassals made every enterprise easy and successful against him. Philip, after taking several castles and fortresses beyond the Loire, which he either garrisoned or dismantled, received the submissions of the count Alençon, who deserted John, and delivered up all the places under his command to the French: upon which Philip broke up his camp, in order to give the troops some repose after the fatigues of the campaign. John, suddenly collecting some forces, laid siege to Alençon; and Philip, whose dispersed army could not be brought together in time to succour it, saw himself exposed to the disgrace of suffering the oppression of his friend and confederate. But his active and fertile genius found an expedient against this evil. There was held at that very time a tournament at Moret, in the Gatinois; whither all the chief nobility of France and the neighbouring countries had resorted, in order to signalize their prowess

and address. Philip presented himself before them ; craved their assistance in his distress ; and pointed out the plains of Alençon, as the most honourable field in which they could display their generosity and martial spirit. Those valorous knights vowed, that they would take vengeance on the base parricide, the stain of arms and of chivalry : and putting themselves, with all their retinue, under the command of Philip, instantly marched to raise the siege of Alençon. John, hearing of their approach, fled from before the place ; and in the hurry abandoned all his tents, machines, and baggage, to the enemy.

This feeble effort was the last exploit of that slothful and cowardly prince for the defence of his dominions. He thenceforth remained in total inactivity at Rouën ; passing all his time, with his young wife, in pastimes and amusements, as if his state had been in the most profound tranquillity, or his affairs in the most prosperous condition. If he ever mentioned war, it was only to give himself vaunting airs, which, in the eyes of all men, rendered him still more despicable and ridiculous. *Let the French go on,* said he, *I will retake in a day what it has cost them years to acquire*^c. His stupidity and indolence appeared so extraordinary, that the people endeavoured to account for the infatuation by sorcery, and believed that he was thrown into this lethargy by some magic or witchcraft. The English barons, finding that their

^c M. Paris, p. 146. M. West, p. 266.

time was wasted to no purpose, and that they must suffer the disgrace of seeing, without resistance, the progress of the French arms, withdrew from their colours, and secretly returned to their own country^d. No one thought of defending a man, who seemed to have deserted himself; and his subjects regarded his fate with the same indifference, to which, in this pressing exigency, they saw him totally abandoned.

John, while he neglected all domestic resources, had the meanness to betake himself to a foreign power, whose protection he claimed: he applied to the pope, Innocent III. and entreated him to interpose his authority between him and the French monarch. Innocent, pleased with any occasion of exerting his superiority, sent Philip orders to stop the progress of his arms, and to make peace with the king of England. But the French barons received the message with indignation; disclaimed the temporal authority assumed by the pontiff; and vowed, that they would, to the uttermost, assist their prince against all his enemies: Philip, seconding their ardour, proceeded, instead of obeying the pope's envoys, to lay siege to Chateau Gaillard, the most considerable fortress which remained to guard the frontiers of Normandy.

Chateau Gaillard was situated partly on an island in the river Seine, partly on a rock opposite to it; and was secured by every advantage

^d M. Paris, p. 146. M. West. p. 264.

which either art or nature could bestow upon it. The late king, having cast his eye on this favourable situation, had spared no labour or expence in fortifying it; and it was defended by Roger de Laci, constable of Chester, a determined officer, at the head of a numerous garrison. Philip, who despaired of taking the place by force, purposed to reduce it by famine; and that he might cut off its communication with the neighbouring country, he threw a bridge across the Seine, while he himself with his army blockaded it by land. The earl of Pembroke, the man of greatest vigour and capacity in the English court, formed a plan for breaking through the French entrenchments, and throwing relief into the place. He carried with him an army of 4000 infantry and 3000 cavalry, and suddenly attacked, with great success, Philip's camp in the night-time; having left orders, that a fleet of seventy flat-bottomed vessels should sail up the Seine, and fall at the same instant on the bridge. But the wind and the current of the river, by retarding the vessels, disconcerted this plan of operations; and it was morning before the fleet appeared; when Pembroke, though successful in the beginning of the action, was already repulsed with considerable loss, and the king of France had leisure to defend himself against these new assailants, who also met with a repulse. After this misfortune, John made no farther efforts for the relief of Chateau Gaillard; and Philip had all the leisure requisite for conducting and finishing

the siege. Roger de Laci defended himself for a twelvemonth with great obstinacy; and having bravely repelled every attack, and patiently borne all the hardships of famine, he was at last overpowered by a sudden assault in the night-time, and made prisoner of war, with his garrison^c. Philip, who knew how to respect valour even in an enemy, treated him with civility, and gave him the whole city of Paris for the place of his confinement.

When the bulwark of Normandy was once subdued, all the province lay open to the inroads of Philip; and the king of England despaired of being any longer able to defend it. He secretly prepared vessels for a scandalous flight; and that the Normans might no longer doubt of his resolution to abandon them, he ordered the fortifications of Pont de l'Arche, Moulineaux, and Montfort l'Amauri, to be demolished. Not daring to repose confidence in any of his barons, whom he believed to be universally engaged in a conspiracy against him, he entrusted the government of the province to Archas Martin and Lupicaire, two mercenary Brabançons, whom he had retained in his service. Philip, now secure of his prey, pushed his conquests with vigour and success against the dismayed Normans. Falaise was first besieged; and Lupicaire, who commanded in this impregnable fortress, after surrendering the place, enlisted himself with his troops in the service of

^c Trivet, p. 144. Gul. Britto, lib. 7. Ann. Waverl. p. 168.

Philip, and carried on hostilities against his ancient master. Caen, Coutance, Seez, Evreux, Baïeux, soon fell into the hands of the French monarch, and all the lower Normandy was reduced under his dominion. To forward his enterprises on the other division of the province, Gui de Thouars, at the head of the Bretons, broke into the territory, and took Mount St. Michael, Avranches, and all the other fortresses in that neighbourhood. The Normans, who abhorred the French yoke, and who would have defended themselves to the last extremity if their prince had appeared to conduct them, found no resource but in submission; and every city opened its gates as soon as Philip appeared before it. Roüen alone, Arques, and Verneüil, determined to maintain their liberties; and formed a confederacy for mutual defence. Philip began with the siege of Roüen: the inhabitants were so inflamed with hatred to France, that, on the appearance of his army, they fell on all the natives of that country, whom they found within their walls, and put them to death. But after the French king had begun his operations with success, and had taken some of their outworks, the citizens, seeing no resource, offered to capitulate; and demanded only thirty days to advertise their prince of their danger, and to require succours against the enemy. Upon the expiration of the term, as no supply had arrived, they opened their gates to Philip^f; and

^f Trivet, p. 147. Ypod. Neust. p. 459.

the whole province soon after imitated the example, and submitted to the victor. Thus was this important territory re-united to the crown of France, about three centuries after the cession of it by Charles the Simple to Rollo, the first duke : and the Normans, sensible that this conquest was probably final, demanded the privilege of being governed by French laws ; which Philip, making a few alterations on the ancient Norman customs, readily granted them. But the French monarch had too much ambition and genius to stop in his present career of success. He carried his victorious army into the western provinces ; soon reduced Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and part of Poictou^g ; and in this manner, the French crown, during the reign of one able and active prince, received such an accession of power and grandeur, as, in the ordinary course of things, it would have required several ages to attain.

John, on his arrival in England, that he might cover the disgrace of his own conduct, exclaimed loudly against his barons, who, he pretended, had deserted his standard in Normandy ; and he arbitrarily extorted from them a seventh of all their moveables, as a punishment for the offence^h. Soon after he forced them to grant him a scutage of two marks and a half on each knight's fee for an expedition into Normandy ; but he did not

^g Trivet, p. 149.

^h M. Paris, p. 146. M. West. p. 265.

attempt to execute the service for which he pretended to exact it. Next year he summoned all the barons of his realm to attend him on his foreign expedition, and collected ships from all the sea-ports; but meeting with opposition from some of his ministers, and abandoning his design, he dismissed both fleet and army, and then renewed his exclamations against the barons for deserting him. He next put to sea with a small army, and his subjects believed, that he was resolved to expose himself to the utmost hazard for the defence and recovery of his dominions; but they were surprised, after a few days, to see him return again into harbour, without attempting any thing. In the subsequent season, he had the courage to carry his hostile measures a step farther. Gui de Thouars, who governed Brittany, jealous of the rapid progress made by his ally, the French king, promised to join the king of England with all his forces; and John ventured abroad with a considerable army, and landed at Rochelle. He marched to Angers; which he took and reduced to ashes. But the approach of Philip with an army threw him into a panic; and he immediately made proposals for peace, and fixed a place of interview with his enemy: but instead of keeping his engagement, he stole off with his army, embarked at Rochelle, and returned, loaded with new shame and disgrace, into England. The mediation of the pope procured

him at last a truce for two years with the French monarchⁱ; almost all the transmarine provinces were ravished from him; and his English barons, though harassed with arbitrary taxes and fruitless expeditions, saw themselves and their country baffled and affronted in every enterprise.

In an age when personal valour was regarded as the chief accomplishment, such conduct as that of John, always disgraceful, must be exposed to peculiar contempt; and he must thenceforth have expected to rule his turbulent vassals with a very doubtful authority. But the government exercised by the Norman princes had wound up the royal power to so high a pitch, and so much beyond the usual tenour of the feudal constitutions, that it still behoved him to be debased by new affronts and disgraces, ere his barons could entertain the view of conspiring against him, in order to retrench his prerogatives. The church, which, at that time, declined not a contest with the most powerful and most vigorous monarchs, took first advantage of John's imbecility; and, with the most aggravating circumstances of insolence and scorn, fixed her yoke upon him.

THE KING'S QUARREL WITH THE COURT OF ROME. 1207.

THE papal chair was then filled by Innocent III. who, having attained that dignity at the age of

ⁱ Rymer, vol. i. p. 141.

thirty-seven years, and being endowed with a lofty and enterprising genius, gave full scope to his ambition, and attempted, perhaps more openly than any of his predecessors, to convert that superiority which was yielded him by all the European princes, into a real dominion over them. The hierarchy, protected by the Roman pontiff, had already carried to an enormous height its usurpations upon the civil power ; but in order to extend them farther, and render them useful to the court of Rome, it was necessary to reduce the ecclesiastics themselves under an absolute monarchy, and to make them entirely dependent on their spiritual leader. For this purpose, Innocent first attempted to impose taxes at pleasure upon the clergy, and in the first year of this century, taking advantage of the popular frenzy for crusades, he sent collectors over all Europe, who levied, by his authority, the fortieth of all ecclesiastical revenues for the relief of the Holy Land, and received the voluntary contributions of the laity to a like amount^k. The same year, Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, attempted another innovation, favourable to ecclesiastical and papal power : in the king's absence, he summoned, by his legantine authority, a synod of all the English clergy, contrary to the inhibition of Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, the chief justiciary ; and no proper censure was ever passed on this encroach-

^k Rymer, vol. i. p. 119.

ment, the first of the kind, upon the royal power. But a favourable incident soon after happened, which enabled so aspiring a pontiff as Innocent to extend still farther his usurpations on so contemptible a prince as John.

Hubert, the primate, died in 1205; and as the monks or canons of Christ-church, Canterbury, possessed a right of voting in the election of their archbishop, some of the juniors of the order, who lay in wait for that event, met clandestinely the very night of Hubert's death; and, without any *congé d'élire* from the king, chose Reginald, their sub-prior, for the successor; installed him in the archiepiscopal throne before midnight; and, having enjoined him the strictest secrecy, sent him immediately to Rome, in order to solicit the confirmation of his election¹. The vanity of Reginald prevailed over his prudence; and he no sooner arrived in Flanders, than he revealed to every one the purpose of his journey, which was immediately known in England^m. The king was enraged at the novelty and temerity of the attempt, in filling so important an office without his knowledge or consent: the suffragan bishops of Canterbury, who were accustomed to concur in the choice of their primate, were no less displeased at the exclusion given them in this election: the senior monks of Christ-church were injured by the irregular proceedings of their

¹ M. Paris, p. 148. M. West. p. 266.

^m Ibid.

juniors: the juniors themselves, ashamed of their conduct, and disgusted with the levity of Reginald, who had broken his engagements with them, were willing to set aside his electionⁿ: and all men concurred in the design of remedying the false measures which had been taken. But as John knew that this affair would be canvassed before a superior tribunal, where the interposition of royal authority of bestowing ecclesiastical benefices was very invidious; where even the cause of suffragan bishops was not so favourable as that of monks; he determined to make the new election entirely unexceptionable: he submitted the affair wholly to the canons of Christ-church; and departing from the right claimed by his predecessors, ventured no farther than to inform them privately, that they would do him an acceptable service if they chose John de Gray, bishop of Norwich, for their primate°. The election of that prelate was accordingly made without a contradictory vote; and the king, to obviate all contests, endeavoured to persuade the suffragan bishops not to insist on their claim of concurring in the election: but those prelates, persevering in their pretensions, sent an agent to maintain their cause before Innocent; while the king, and the convent of Christ-church, dispatched twelve monks of that order to support, before

ⁿ M. West. p. 266.

° M. Paris, p. 149. M. West. p. 266.

the same tribunal, the election of the bishop of Norwich.

Thus there lay three different claims before the pope, whom all parties allowed to be the supreme arbiter in the contest. The claim of the suffragans, being so opposite to the usual maxims of the papal court, was soon set aside: the election of Reginald was so obviously fraudulent and irregular, that there was no possibility of defending it: but Innocent maintained, that though this election was null and invalid, it ought previously to have been declared such by the sovereign pontiff, before the monks could proceed to a new election: and that the choice of the bishop of Norwich was of course as uncanonical as that of his competitor^p. Advantage was therefore taken of this subtlety for introducing a precedent, by which the see of Canterbury, the most important dignity in the church after the papal throne, should ever after be at the disposal of the court of Rome.

While the pope maintained so many fierce contests, in order to wrest from princes the right of granting investitures, and to exclude laymen from all authority in conferring ecclesiastical benefices, he was supported by the united influence of the clergy, who, aspiring to independence, fought, with all the ardour of ambition, and all the zeal of superstition, under his sacred banners.

^p M. Paris, p. 155. Chron. de Mail. p. 182.

But no sooner was this point, after a great effusion of blood and the convulsions of many states, established in some tolerable degree, than the victorious leader, as is usual, turned his arms against his own community, and aspired to centre all power in his person. By the invention of reserves, provisions, commendams, and other devices, the pope gradually assumed the right of filling vacant benefices; and the plenitude of his apostolic power, which was not subject to any limitations, supplied all defects of title in the person on whom he bestowed preferment. The canons which regulated elections were purposely rendered intricate and involved: frequent disputes arose among candidates: appeals were every day carried to Rome: the apostolic see, besides reaping pecuniary advantages from these contests, often exercised the power of setting aside both the litigants, and, on pretence of appeasing faction, nominated a third person, who might be more acceptable to the contending parties.

CARDINAL LANGTON APPOINTED ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

THE present controversy about the election to the see of Canterbury afforded Innocent an opportunity of claiming this right; and he failed not to perceive and avail himself of the advantage. He sent for the twelve monks deputed by the

convent to maintain the cause of the bishop of Norwich ; and commanded them, under the penalty of excommunication, to choose for their primate, cardinal Langton, an Englishman by birth, but educated in France, and connected, by his interest and attachments, with the see of Rome⁹. In vain did the monks represent, that they had received from their convent no authority for this purpose; that an election, without a previous writ from the king, would be deemed highly irregular; and that they were merely agents for another person, whose right they had no power or pretence to abandon. None of them had the courage to persevere in this opposition, except one, Elias de Brantefield: all the rest, overcome by the menaces and authority of the pope, complied with his orders, and made the election required of them.

Innocent, sensible that this flagrant usurpation would be highly resented by the court of England, wrote John a mollifying letter; sent him four golden rings set with precious stones; and endeavoured to enhance the value of the present, by informing him of the many mysteries implied in it. He begged him to consider seriously the *form* of the rings, their *number*, their *matter*, and their *colour*. Their form, he said, being round, shadowed out Eternity, which had neither begin-

⁹ M. Paris, p. 155. Ann. Waverl. p. 169. W. Heming. p. 553. Knyghton, p. 2415.

ning nor end ; and he ought thence to learn his duty of aspiring from earthly objects to heavenly, from things temporal to things eternal. The number four, being a square, denoted Steadiness of Mind, not to be subverted either by adversity or prosperity, fixed for ever on the firm basis of the four cardinal virtues. Gold, which is the matter, being the most precious of metals, signified Wisdom, which is the most valuable of all accomplishments, and justly preferred by Solomon to riches, power, and all exterior attainments. The blue colour of the saphire represented Faith ; the verdure of the emerald, Hope ; the redness of the ruby, Charity ; and the splendour of the topaz, Good Works^r. By these conceits, Innocent endeavoured to repay John for one of the most important prerogatives of his crown, which he had ravished from him ; conceits probably admired by Innocent himself : for it is easily possible for a man, especially in a barbarous age, to unite strong talents for business with an absurd taste for literature and the arts.

John was inflamed with the utmost rage when he heard of this attempt of the court of Rome^s ; and he immediately vented his passion on the monks of Christ-church, whom he found inclined to support the election made by their fellows at Rome. He sent Fulke de Cantelupe and Henry

^r Rymer, vol. i. p. 139. M. Paris, p. 155.

^s Rymer, vol. i. p. 143.

de Cornhulle, two knights of his retinue, men of violent tempers and rude manners, to expel them the convent, and take possession of their revenues. These knights entered the monastery with drawn swords, commanded the prior and the monks to depart the kingdom, and menaced them, that in case of disobedience, they would instantly burn them with the convent¹. Innocent prognosticating, from the violence and imprudence of these measures, that John would finally sink in the contest, persevered the more vigorously in his pretensions, and exhorted the king not to oppose God and the church any longer, nor to prosecute that cause for which the holy martyr St. Thomas had sacrificed his life, and which had exalted him equal to the highest saints in heaven²: a clear hint to John to profit by the example of his father, and to remember the prejudices and established principles of his subjects, who bore a profound veneration to that martyr, and regarded his merits as the subject of their chief glory and exultation.

Innocent, finding that John was not sufficiently tamed to submission, sent three prelates, the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, to intimate that if he persevered in his disobedience, the sovereign pontiff would be obliged to lay the kingdom under an interdict³. All the other pre-

¹ M. Paris, p. 156. Trivet, p. 151. Ann. Waverl. p. 169.

² M. Paris, p. 157.

³ Ibid.

lates threw themselves on their knees before him, and entreated him, with tears in their eyes, to prevent the scandal of this sentence, by making a speedy submission to his spiritual father, by receiving from his hands the new-elected primate, and by restoring the monks of Christ-church to all their rights and possessions. He burst out into the most indecent invectives against the prelates; swore by God's teeth (his usual oath), that if the pope presumed to lay his kingdom under an interdict, he would send to him all the bishops and clergy in England, and would confiscate all their estates; and threatened, that if thenceforth he caught any Romans in his dominions, he would put out their eyes and cut off their noses, in order to set a mark upon them which might distinguish them from all other nations^x. Amidst all this idle violence, John stood on such bad terms with his nobility, that he never dared to assemble the states of the kingdom, who, in so just a cause, would probably have adhered to any other monarch, and have defended with vigour the liberties of the nation against these palpable usurpations of the court of Rome. Innocent, therefore, perceiving the king's weakness, fulminated at last the sentence of interdict, which he had for some time held suspended over him^y.

^x M. Paris, p. 157.

^y Ibid. Trivet, p. 152. Ann. Waverl. p. 170. M. West. p. 268.

The sentence of interdict was at that time the great instrument of vengeance and policy employed by the court of Rome; was denounced against sovereigns for the lightest offences; and made the guilt of one person involve the ruin of millions, even in their spiritual and eternal welfare. The execution of it was calculated to strike the senses in the highest degree, and to operate with irresistible force on the superstitious minds of the people. The nation was of a sudden deprived of all exterior exercise of its religion: the altars were despoiled of their ornaments: the crosses, the reliques, the images, the statues of the saints, were laid on the ground; and, as if the air itself were profaned, and might pollute them by its contact, the priests carefully covered them up, even from their own approach and veneration. The use of bells entirely ceased in all the churches: the bells themselves were removed from the steeples, and laid on the ground with the other sacred utensils. Mass was celebrated with shut doors, and none but the priests were admitted to that holy institution. The laity partook of no religious rite, except baptism to new-born infants, and the communion to the dying: the dead were not interred in consecrated ground: they were thrown into ditches, or buried in common fields; and their obsequies were not attended with prayers or any hallowed ceremony. Marriage was celebrated in the church-yards^z; and that every action

^z Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 51.

in life might bear the marks of this dreadful situation, the people were prohibited the use of meat as in Lent, or times of the highest penance; were debarred from all pleasures and entertainments, and even to salute each other, or so much as to shave their beards, and give any decent attention to their person and apparel. Every circumstance carried symptoms of the deepest distress, and of the most immediate apprehension of divine vengeance and indignation.

The king, that he might oppose *his* temporal to *their* spiritual terrors, immediately, from his own authority, confiscated the estates of all the clergy who obeyed the interdict^a; banished the prelates, confined the monks in their convent, and gave them only such a small allowance from their own estates as would suffice to provide them with food and raiment. He treated with the utmost rigour all Langton's adherents, and every one that showed any disposition to obey the commands of Rome: and in order to distress the clergy in the tenderest point, and at the same time expose them to reproach and ridicule, he threw into prison all their concubines, and required high fines as the price of their liberty^b.

After the canons which established the celibacy of the clergy were, by the zealous endeavours of archbishop Anselm, more rigorously executed in

^a Ann. Waverl. p. 170.

^b M. Paris, p. 158. Ann. Waverl. p. 170.

England, the ecclesiastics gave, almost universally and avowedly, into the use of concubinage; and the court of Rome, which had no interest in prohibiting this practice, made very slight opposition to it. The custom was become so prevalent, that, in some cantons of Switzerland, before the reformation, the laws not only permitted, but, to avoid scandal, enjoined the use of concubines to the younger clergy; and it was usual every where for priests to apply to the ordinary, and obtain from him a formal liberty for this indulgence. The bishop commonly took care to prevent the practice from degenerating into licentiousness: he confined the priest to the use of one woman, required him to be constant to her bed, obliged him to provide for her subsistence and that of her children; and though the offspring was, in the eye of the law, deemed illegitimate, this commerce was really a kind of inferior marriage, such as is still practised in Germany among the nobles^c; and may be regarded by the candid as an appeal from the tyranny of civil and ecclesiastical institutions, to the more virtuous and more unerring laws of nature.

The quarrel between the king and the see of Rome continued for some years; and though many of the clergy, from the fear of punishment, obeyed the orders of John, and celebrated divine service, they complied with the utmost reluctance, and were regarded, both by themselves and

^c Padre Paolo, Hist. Conc. Trid. lib. 1.

the people, as men who betrayed their principles, and sacrificed their conscience to temporal regards and interests. During this violent situation, the king, in order to give a lustre to his government, attempted military expeditions against Scotland, against Ireland, against the Welsh^d; and he commonly prevailed, more from the weakness of his enemies, than from his own vigour or abilities. Meanwhile, the danger to which his government stood continually exposed from the discontents of the ecclesiastics, increased his natural propensity to tyranny; and he seems to have even wantonly disgusted all orders of men, especially his nobles, from whom alone he could reasonably expect support and assistance. He dishonoured their families by his licentious amours; he published edicts, prohibiting them from hunting feathered game, and thereby restrained them from their favourite occupation and amusement^e; he ordered all the hedges and fences near his forests to be levelled, that his deer might have more ready access into the fields for pasture; and he continually loaded the nation with arbitrary impositions. Conscious of the general hatred which he had incurred, he required his nobility to give him hostages for security of their allegiance; and they were obliged to put into his hands their sons, nephews, or near relations. When his messengers

^d W. Heming, p. 556. Ypod. Neust. p. 460. Knyghton, p. 2420.

^e M. West. p. 268.

came with like orders to the castle of William de Braouse, a baron of great note, the lady of that nobleman replied, That she would never entrust her son into the hands of one who had murdered his own nephew while in his custody. Her husband reproved her for the severity of this speech; but, sensible of his danger, he immediately fled with his wife and son into Ireland, where he endeavoured to conceal himself. The king discovered the unhappy family in their retreat; seized the wife and son, whom he starved to death in prison; and the baron himself narrowly escaped, by flying into France.

The court of Rome had artfully contrived a gradation of sentences; by which she kept offenders in awe; still afforded them an opportunity of preventing the next anathema by submission; and, in case of their obstinacy, was able to refresh the horror of the people against them, by new denunciations of the wrath and vengeance of Heaven. As the sentence of interdict had not produced the desired effect on John, and as his people, though extremely discontented, had hitherto been restrained from rising in open rebellion against him, he was soon to look for the sentence of excommunication: and he had reason to apprehend, that, notwithstanding all his precautions, the most dangerous consequences might ensue from it. He was witness of the other scenes which at that very time were acting in Europe, and which displayed the unbounded and uncontrolled power of

the papacy. Innocent, far from being dismayed at his contests with the king of England, had excommunicated the emperor Otho, John's nephew^f; and soon brought that powerful and haughty prince to submit to his authority. He published a crusade against the Albigenses, a species of enthusiasts in the south of France, whom he denominated heretics; because, like other enthusiasts, they neglected the rights of the church, and opposed the power and influence of the clergy: the people from all parts of Europe, moved by their superstition and their passion for wars and adventures, flocked to his standard: Simon de Montfort, the general of the crusade, acquired to himself a sovereignty in these provinces: the count of Toulouse, who protected, or perhaps only tolerated the Albigenses, was stripped of his dominions: and these sectaries themselves, though the most innocent and inoffensive of mankind, were exterminated with all the circumstances of extreme violence and barbarity. Here were therefore both an army and a general, dangerous from their zeal and valour, who might be directed to act against John; and Innocent, after keeping the thunder long suspended, gave at last authority to the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, to fulminate the sentence of excommunication against him^g. These

^f M. Paris, p. 160. Trivet, p. 154. M. West. p. 269.

^g M. Paris, p. 159. M. West. p. 270.

prelates obeyed ; though their brethren were deterred from publishing, as the pope required of them, the sentence in the several churches of their dioceses.

No sooner was the excommunication known, than the effects of it appeared. Geoffrey, archdeacon of Norwich, who was entrusted with a considerable office in the court of the exchequer, being informed of it while sitting on the bench, observed to his colleagues the danger of serving under an excommunicated king ; and he immediately left his chair, and departed the court. John gave orders to seize him, to throw him into prison, to cover his head with a great leaden cope ; and by this and other severe usage he put an end to his life^b : nor was there any thing wanting to Geoffrey, except the dignity and rank of Becket, to exalt him to an equal station in heaven with that great and celebrated martyr. Hugh de Wells, the chancellor, being elected, by the king's appointment, bishop of Lincoln, upon a vacancy in that see, desired leave to go abroad, in order to receive consecration from the archbishop of Roüen ; but he no sooner reached France than he hastened to Pontigny, where Langton then resided, and paid submissions to him as his primate. The bishops, finding themselves exposed either to the jealousy of the king or hatred of the people, gradually stole out of the kingdom ; and at last

^b M. Paris, p. 159.

there remained only three prelates to perform the functions of the episcopal officeⁱ. Many of the nobility, terrified by John's tyranny, and obnoxious to him on different accounts, imitated the example of the bishops; and most of the others who remained were, with reason, suspected of having secretly entered into a confederacy against him^k. John was alarmed at his dangerous situation; a situation which prudence, vigour, and popularity might formerly have prevented, but which no virtues or abilities were now sufficient to retrieve. He desired a conference with Langton at Dover; offered to acknowledge him as primate, to submit to the pope, to restore the exiled clergy, even to pay them a limited sum as a compensation for the rents of their confiscated estates. But Langton, perceiving his advantage, was not satisfied with these concessions: he demanded that full restitution and reparation should be made to all the clergy; a condition so exorbitant that the king, who probably had not the power of fulfilling it, and who foresaw that this estimation of damages might amount to an immense sum, finally broke off the conference^l.

The next gradation of papal sentences was to absolve John's subjects from their oaths of fidelity and allegiance, and to declare every one excommunicated who had any commerce with him in

ⁱ Ann. Waverl. p. 170. Ann. Marg. p. 14.

^k M. Paris, p. 162. M. West. p. 270, 271.

^l Ann. Waverl. p. 171.

public or in private; at his table, in his council, or even in private conversation^m: and this sentence was accordingly, with all imaginable solemnity, pronounced against him. But as John still persevered in his contumacy, there remained nothing but the sentence of deposition; which, though intimately connected with the former, had been distinguished from it by the artifice of the court of Rome; and Innocent determined to dart this last thunderbolt against the refractory monarch. But as a sentence of this kind required an armed force to execute it, the pontiff, casting his eyes around, fixed at last on Philip king of France, as the person into whose powerful hand he could most properly entrust that weapon, the ultimate resource of his ghostly authority. And he offered the monarch, besides the remission of all his sins and endless spiritual benefits, the property and possession of the kingdom of England, as the reward of his labourⁿ.

It was the common concern of all princes to oppose these exorbitant pretensions of the Roman pontiff, by which they themselves were rendered vassals, and vassals totally dependent of the papal crown: yet even Philip, the most able monarch of the age, was seduced by present interest, and by the prospect of so tempting a prize, to accept this liberal offer of the pontiff, and thereby to ratify that authority which, if he ever opposed its

^m M. Paris, p. 161. M. West. p. 270.

ⁿ M. Paris, p. 162. M. West. p. 271.

boundless usurpations, might next day tumble him from the throne. He levied a great army; summoned all the vassals of the crown to attend him at Rouën; collected a fleet of 1700 vessels, great and small, in the sea-ports of Normandy and Picardy; and partly from the zealous spirit of the age, partly from the personal regard universally paid him, prepared a force, which seemed equal to the greatness of his enterprise. The king, on the other hand, issued out writs, requiring the attendance of all his military tenants at Dover, and even of all able-bodied men, to defend the kingdom in this dangerous extremity. A great number appeared; and he selected an army of 60,000 men; a power invincible, had they been united in affection to their prince, and animated with a becoming zeal for the defence of their native country^o. But the people were swayed by superstition, and regarded their king with horror, as anathematised by papal censures: the barons, besides, lying under the same prejudices, were all disgusted by his tyranny, and were, many of them, suspected of holding a secret correspondence with the enemy: and the incapacity and cowardice of the king himself, ill fitted to contend with those mighty difficulties, made men prognosticate the most fatal effects from the French invasion.

Pandolf, whom the pope had chosen for his legate, and appointed to head this important ex-

^o M. Paris, p. 163. M. West. p. 271.

pedition, had, before he left Rome, applied for a secret conference with his master, and had asked him, whether if the king of England, in this desperate situation, were willing to submit to the apostolic see, the church should, without the consent of Philip, grant him any terms of accommodation^p? Innocent, expecting from his agreement with a prince so abject both in character and fortune, more advantages than from his alliance with a great and victorious monarch, who, after such mighty acquisitions, might become too haughty to be bound by spiritual chains, explained to Pandolf the conditions on which he was willing to be reconciled to the king of England. The legate, therefore, as soon as he arrived in the north of France, sent over two knights templars to desire an interview with John at Dover, which was readily granted: he there represented to him, in such strong, and probably in such true colours, his lost condition, the disaffection of his subjects, the secret combination of his vassals against him, the mighty armament of France, that John yielded at discretion^q, and subscribed to all the conditions which Pandolf was pleased to impose upon him. He promised, among other articles, that he would submit himself entirely to the judgment of the pope; that he would acknowledge Langton for primate; that he would restore all the exiled clergy and laity who had been banished on account of the contest; that he would make them

^p M. Paris, p. 162.^q M. West. p. 271.

full restitution of their goods, and compensation for all damages, and instantly consign eight thousand pounds in part of payment; and that every one outlawed or imprisoned for his adherence to the pope, should immediately be received into grace and favour^r. Four barons swore, along with the king, to the observance of this ignominious treaty^s.

But the ignominy of the king was not yet carried to its full height. Pandolf required him, as the first trial of obedience, to resign his kingdom to the church; and he persuaded him, that he could nowise so effectually disappoint the French invasion, as by thus putting himself under the immediate protection of the apostolic see. John, lying under the agonies of present terror, made no scruple of submitting to this condition. He passed a charter, in which he said, that not constrained by fear, but of his own free will, and by the common advice and consent of his barons, he had, for remission of his own sins, and those of his family, resigned England and Ireland to God, to St. Peter and St. Paul, and to pope Innocent and his successors in the apostolic chair: he agreed to hold these dominions as feudatory of the church of Rome, by the annual payment of a thousand marks; seven hundred for England, three hundred for Ireland: and he stipulated, that if he or his successors should ever presume to

^r Rymer, vol. i. p. 166. M. Paris, p. 163. Annal. Burt. p. 268.

^s Rymer, vol. i. p. 170. M. Paris, p. 163.

revoke or infringe this charter, they should instantly, except upon admonition they repented of their offence, forfeit all right to their dominions^t.

In consequence of this agreement, John did homage to Pandolf as the pope's legate with all the submissive rites which the feudal law required of vassals before their liege-lord and superior. He came disarmed into the legate's presence, who was seated on a throne; he flung himself on his knees before him; he lifted up his joined hands, and put them within those of Pandolf; he swore fealty to the pope; and he paid part of the tribute which he owed for his kingdom as the patrimony of St. Peter. The legate, elated by this supreme triumph of sacerdotal power, could not forbear discovering extravagant symptoms of joy and exultation: he trampled on the money, which was laid at his feet, as an earnest of the subjection of the kingdom: an insolence of which, however offensive to all the English, no one present, except the archbishop of Dublin, dared to take any notice. But though Pandolf had brought the king to submit to these base conditions, he still refused to free him from the excommunication and interdict, till an estimation should be taken of the losses of the ecclesiastics, and full compensation and restitution should be made them.

John, reduced to this abject situation under a foreign power, still shewed the same disposition to

^t Rymer, vol. i. p. 176. M. Paris, p. 165.

tyrannise over his subjects, which had been the chief cause of all his misfortunes. One Peter of Pomfret, a hermit, had foretold that the king, this very year, should lose his crown; and for that rash prophecy he had been thrown into prison in Corfe-castle. John now determined to bring him to punishment as an impostor; and though the man pleaded, that his prophecy was fulfilled, and that the king had lost the royal and independent crown which he formerly wore, the defence was supposed to aggravate his guilt: he was dragged at horses tails, to the town of Warham, and there hanged on a gibbet with his son^u.

When Pandolf, after receiving the homage of John, returned to France, he congratulated Philip on the success of his pious enterprise; and informed him, that John, moved by the terror of the French arms, had now come to a just sense of his guilt; had returned to obedience under the apostolic see, and even consented to do homage to the pope for his dominions; and having thus made his kingdom a part of St. Peter's patrimony, had rendered it impossible for any Christian prince, without the most manifest and most flagrant impiety, to attack him^w. Philip was enraged on receiving this intelligence: he exclaimed, that having, at the pope's instigations, undertaken an expedition, which had cost him above 60,000 pounds sterling, he was frustrated of his purpose,

^u M, Paris, p. 165. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 56.

^w Trivet, p. 160.

at the time when its success was become infallible : he complained, that all the expence had fallen upon him ; all the advantages had accrued to Innocent : he threatened to be no longer the dupe of these hypocritical pretences : and assembling his vassals, he laid before them the ill-treatment which he had received, exposed the interested and fraudulent conduct of the pope, and required their assistance to execute his enterprise against England, in which he told them, that, notwithstanding the inhibitions and menaces of the legate, he was determined to persevere. The French barons were, in that age, little less ignorant and superstitious than the English : yet, so much does the influence of religious principles depend on the present dispositions of men ! they all vowed to follow their prince on his intended expedition, and were resolute not to be disappointed of that glory and those riches which they had long expected from this enterprise. The earl of Flanders alone, who had previously formed a secret treaty with John, declaring against the injustice and impiety of the undertaking, retired with his forces* ; and Philip, that he might not leave so dangerous an enemy behind him, first turned his arms against the dominions of that prince. Meanwhile, the English fleet was assembled under the earl of Salisbury, the king's natural brother ; and, though inferior in number, received orders to attack the French in their har-

* M. Paris, p. 166.

bours. Salisbury performed this service with so much success, that he took three hundred ships; destroyed a hundred more^y; and Philip, finding it impossible to prevent the rest from falling into the hands of the enemy, set fire to them himself, and thereby rendered it impossible for him to proceed any farther in his enterprise.

John, exulting in his present security, insensible to his past disgrace, was so elated with his success, that he thought of no less than invading France in his turn, and recovering all those provinces which the prosperous arms of Philip had formerly ravished from him. He proposed this expedition to the barons, who were already assembled for the defence of the kingdom. But the English nobles both hated and despised their prince: they prognosticated no success to any enterprise conducted by such a leader: and pretending that their time of service was elapsed, and all their provisions exhausted, they refused to second his undertaking^z. The king however, resolute in his purpose, embarked with a few followers, and sailed to Jersey, in the foolish expectation that the barons would at last be ashamed to stay behind^a. But finding himself disappointed, he returned to England; and raising some troops, threatened to take vengeance on all his nobles for their desertion and disobedience. The archbishop of Canterbury, who was in a confe-

^y M. Paris, p. 166. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 59. Trivet, p. 157.

^z M. Paris, p. 166.

^a Ibid.

deracy with the barons, here interposed ; strictly inhibited the king from thinking of such an attempt ; and threatened him with a renewal of the sentence of excommunication, if he pretended to levy war upon any of his subjects, before the kingdom were freed from the sentence of interdict^b.

The church had recalled the several anathemas pronounced against John, by the same gradual progress with which she had at first issued them. By receiving his homage, and admitting him to the rank of a vassal, his deposition had been virtually annulled, and his subjects were again bound by their oaths of allegiance. The exiled prelates had then returned in great triumph, with Langton at their head ; and the king, hearing of their approach, went forth to meet them, and throwing himself on the ground before them, he entreated them, with tears, to have compassion on him and the kingdom of England^c. The primate, seeing these marks of sincere penitence, led him to the chapter-house of Winchester, and there administered an oath to him, by which he again swore fealty and obedience to pope Innocent and his successors ; promised to love, maintain, and defend holy church and the clergy ; engaged that he would re-establish the good laws of his predecessors, particularly those of St. Edward, and would abolish the wicked ones ; and expressed his resolution of maintaining justice and right in all

^b M. Paris, p. 167.

^c Ibid. p. 166. Ann. Waverl. p. 178.

his dominions^d. The primate next gave him absolution in the requisite forms, and admitted him to dine with him, to the great joy of all the people. The sentence of interdict, however, was still upheld against the kingdom. A new legate, Nicholas bishop of Frescati, came into England in the room of Pandolf; and he declared it to be the pope's intentions never to loosen that sentence till full restitution were made to the clergy of every thing taken from them, and ample reparation for all damages which they had sustained. He only permitted mass to be said with a low voice in the churches, till those losses and damages could be estimated to the satisfaction of the parties. Certain barons were appointed to take an account of the claims; and John was astonished at the greatness of the sums to which the clergy made their losses to amount. No less than twenty thousand marks were demanded by the monks of Canterbury alone; twenty-three thousand for the see of Lincoln; and the king, finding these pretensions to be exorbitant and endless, offered the clergy the sum of a hundred thousand marks for a final acquittal. The clergy rejected the offer with disdain; but the pope, willing to favour his new vassal, whom he found zealous in his declarations of fealty, and regular in paying the stipulated tribute to Rome, directed his legate to accept of forty thousand. The issue of the whole was, that the bishops and considerable abbots got repara-

^d M. Paris, p. 166.

tion beyond what they had any title to demand : the inferior clergy were obliged to sit down contented with their losses : and the king, after the interdict was taken off, renewed, in the most solemn manner, and by a new charter, sealed with gold, his professions of homage and obedience to the see of Rome.

When this vexatious affair was at last brought to a conclusion, the king, as if he had nothing farther to attend to but triumphs and victories, went over to Poictou, which still acknowledged his authority^c; and he carried war into Philip's dominions. He besieged a castle near Angiers; but the approach of prince Lewis, Philip's son, obliged him to raise the siege with such precipitation, that he left his tents, machines, and baggage behind him; and he returned to England with disgrace. About the same time, he heard of the great and decisive victory gained by the king of France at Bovines over the emperor Otho, who had entered France at the head of 150,000 Germans; a victory which established for ever the glory of Philip, and gave full security to all his dominions. John could, therefore, think henceforth of nothing farther, than of ruling peaceably his own kingdom; and his close connexions with the pope, which he was determined at any price to maintain, ensured him, as he imagined, the certain attainment of that object. But the last and most grievous scene of this prince's

^c Queen Eleanor died in 1203 or 1204.

misfortunes still awaited him; and he was destined to pass through a series of more humiliating circumstances than had ever yet fallen to the lot of any other monarch.

DISCONTENTS OF THE BARONS. 1214.

THE introduction of the feudal law into England by William the Conqueror had much infringed the liberties, however imperfect, enjoyed by the Anglo-Saxons in their ancient government, and had reduced the whole people to a state of vassalage under the king or barons, and even the greater part of them to a state of real slavery. The necessity also of entrusting great power in the hands of a prince, who was to maintain military dominion over a vanquished nation, had engaged the Norman barons to submit to a more severe and absolute prerogative, than that to which men of their rank, in other feudal governments, were commonly subjected. The power of the crown, once raised to a high pitch, was not easily reduced; and the nation, during the course of a hundred and fifty years, was governed by an authority unknown, in the same degree, to all the kingdoms founded by the northern conquerors. Henry I. that he might allure the people to give an exclusion to his elder brother Robert, had granted them a charter, favourable in many particulars to their liberties; Stephen had renewed the grant;

Henry II. had confirmed it: but the concessions of all these princes had still remained without effect; and the same unlimited, at least irregular authority, continued to be exercised both by them and their successors. The only happiness was, that arms were never yet ravished from the hands of the barons and people: the nation, by a great confederacy, might still vindicate its liberties: and nothing was more likely, than the character, conduct, and fortunes of the reigning prince, to produce such a general combination against him. Equally odious and contemptible, both in public and private life, he affronted the barons by his insolence, dishonoured their families by his gallantries, enraged them by his tyranny, and gave discontent to all ranks of men by his endless exactions and impositions^f. The effect of these lawless practices had already appeared in the general demand made by the barons of a restoration of their privileges; and after he had reconciled himself to the pope, by abandoning the independence of the kingdom, he appeared to all his subjects in so mean a light, that they universally thought they might with safety and honour insist upon their pretensions.

But nothing forwarded this confederacy so much as the concurrence of Langton archbishop of Canterbury; a man whose memory, though he was obtruded on the nation by a palpable en-

^f Chron. Mailr. p. 188. T. Wykes, p. 36. Ann. Waverl. p. 181. W. Heming. p. 557.

croachment of the see of Rome, ought always to be respected by the English. This prelate, whether he was moved by the generosity of his nature, and his affection to public good ; or had entertained an animosity against John on account of the long opposition made by that prince to his election ; or thought that an acquisition of liberty to the people would serve to increase and secure the privileges of the church ; had formed the plan of reforming the government, and had prepared the way for that great innovation, by inserting those singular clauses above mentioned in the oath which he administered to the king, before he would absolve him from the sentence of excommunication. Soon after, in a private meeting of some principal barons at London, he showed them a copy of Henry I.'s charter, which, he said, he had happily found in a monastery ; and he exhorted them to insist on the renewal and observance of it : the barons swore, that they would sooner lose their lives than depart from so reasonable a demand^g. The confederacy began now to spread wider, and to comprehend almost all the barons in England ; and a new and more numerous meeting was summoned by Langton at St. Edmondsbury, under colour of devotion. He again produced to the assembly the old charter of Henry ; renewed his exhortations of unanimity and vigour in the prosecution of their purpose ; and represented in the strongest colours the tyranny to

^g M. Paris, p. 167.

which they had so long been subjected, and from which it now behoved them to free themselves and their posterity^h. The barons, inflamed by his eloquence, incited by the sense of their own wrongs, and encouraged by the appearance of their power and numbers, solemnly took an oath, before the high altar, to adhere to each other, to insist on their demands, and to make endless war on the king, till he should submit to grant themⁱ. They agreed, that, after the festival of Christmas, they would prefer in a body their common petition; and, in the mean time, they separated, after mutually engaging, that they would put themselves in a posture of defence, would enlist men and purchase arms, and would supply their castles with the necessary provisions.

JANUARY 6, 1215.

THE barons appeared in London on the day appointed; and demanded of the king, that, in consequence of his own oath before the primate, as well as in deference to their just rights, he should grant them a renewal of Henry's charter, and a confirmation of the laws of St. Edward. The king, alarmed with their zeal and unanimity, as well as with their power, required a delay; promised that, at the festival of Easter, he would give them a positive answer to their petition; and

^h M. Paris, p. 175.

ⁱ Ibid. p. 176.

offered them the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Ely, and the earl of Pembroke, the mareschal, as sureties for his fulfilling this engagement^k. The barons accepted of the terms, and peaceably returned to their castles.

During this interval, John, in order to break or subdue the league of his barons, endeavoured to avail himself of the ecclesiastical power of whose influence he had, from his own recent misfortunes, had such fatal experience. He granted to the clergy a charter, relinquishing for ever that important prerogative for which his father and all his ancestors had zealously contended; yielding to them the free election on all vacancies, reserving only the power to issue a *congé d'elire*, and to subjoin a confirmation of the election; and declaring that, if either of these were withheld, the choice should nevertheless be deemed just and valid^l. He made a vow to lead an army into Palestine against the infidels, and he took on him the cross; in hopes that he should receive from the church that protection which he tendered to every one that had entered into this sacred and meritorious engagement^m. And he sent to Rome his agent, William de Mauclerc, in order to appeal to the pope against the violence of his barons, and procure him a favourable sentence from that

^k M. Paris, p. 176. M. West. p. 273.

^l Rymer, vol. i. p. 197.

^m Rymer, vol. i. p. 200.

Trivet, p. 162, T. Wykes, p. 37. M. West. p. 273.

powerful tribunalⁿ. The barons also were not negligent on their part in endeavouring to engage the pope in their interests: they dispatched Eustace de Vescie to Rome; laid their case before Innocent as their feudal lord; and petitioned him to interpose his authority with the king, and oblige him to restore and confirm all their just and undoubted privileges^o.

Innocent beheld with regret the disturbances which had arisen in England, and was much inclined to favour John in his pretensions. He had no hopes of retaining and extending his newly acquired superiority over that kingdom, but by supporting so base and degenerate a prince, who was willing to sacrifice every consideration to his present safety: and he foresaw, that if the administration should fall into the hands of those gallant and high-spirited barons, they would vindicate the honour, liberty, and independence of the nation, with the same ardour which they now exerted in defence of their own. He wrote letters therefore to the prelates, to the nobility, and to the king himself. He exhorted the first to employ their good offices in conciliating peace between the contending parties, and putting an end to civil discord: to the second, he expressed his disapprobation of their conduct in employing force to extort concessions from their reluctant sovereign: the last, he advised to treat his nobles with grace and indulgence, and to grant them such

ⁿ Rymer, vol. i. p. 184.

^o Ibid.

of their demands as should appear just and reasonable^p.

The barons easily saw, from the tenor of these letters, that they must reckon on having the pope, as well as the king, for their adversary; but they had already advanced too far to recede from their pretensions, and their passions were so deeply engaged, that it exceeded even the power of superstition itself any longer to control them. They also foresaw, that the thunders of Rome, when not seconded by the efforts of the English ecclesiastics, would be of small avail against them; and they perceived, that the most considerable of the prelates, as well as all the inferior clergy, professed the highest approbation of their cause. Besides that these men were seized with the national passion for laws and liberty; blessings of which they themselves expected to partake; there concurred very powerful causes to loosen their devoted attachment to the apostolic see. It appeared, from the late usurpations of the Roman pontiff, that he pretended to reap alone all the advantages accruing from that victory, which, under his banners, though at their own peril, they had every where obtained over the civil magistrate. The pope assumed a despotic power over all the churches: their particular customs, privileges, and immunities, were treated with disdain; even the canons of general councils were set aside by his dispensing power: the whole administration

^p Rymer, vol. i. p. 196, 197.

of the church was centered in the court of Rome : all preferments ran of course in the same channel : and the provincial clergy saw, at least felt, that there was a necessity for limiting these pretensions. The legate, Nicholas, in filling those numerous vacancies which had fallen in England during an interdict of six years, had proceeded in the most arbitrary manner ; and had paid no regard in conferring dignities to personal merit, to rank, to the inclination of the electors, or to the customs of the country. The English church was universally disgusted ; and Langton himself, though he owed his elevation to an incroachment of the Romish see, was no sooner established in his high office, than he became jealous of the privileges annexed to it, and formed attachments with the country subjected to his jurisdiction. These causes, though they opened slowly the eyes of men, failed not to produce their effect : they set bounds to the usurpations of the papacy : the tide first stopped, and then turned against the sovereign pontiff : and it is otherwise inconceivable, how that age, so prone to superstition, and so sunk in ignorance, or rather so devoted to a spurious erudition, could have escaped falling into an absolute and total slavery under the court of Rome.

INSURRECTION OF THE BARONS.

ABOUT the time that the pope's letters arrived in England, the malcontent barons, on the approach of the festival of Easter, when they were to expect the king's answer to their petition, met by agreement at Stamford; and they assembled a force, consisting of above 2000 knights, besides their retainers and inferior persons without number. Elated with their power, they advanced in a body to Brackley, within fifteen miles of Oxford, the place where the court then resided; and they there received a message from the king, by the archbishop of Canterbury and the earl of Pembroke, desiring to know what those liberties were which they so zealously challenged from their sovereign. They delivered to these messengers a schedule containing the chief articles of their demands; which was no sooner shown to the king, than he burst into a furious passion, and asked, why the barons did not also demand of him his kingdom; swearing that he would never grant them such liberties as must reduce himself to slavery^a.

No sooner were the confederated nobles informed of John's reply, than they chose Robert Fitz-Walter their general, whom they called *the mareschal of the army of God and of holy church*; and they proceeded without farther ceremony to

^a M. Paris, p. 176.

levy war upon the king. They besieged the castle of Northampton during fifteen days, though without success^r: the gates of Bedford castle were willingly opened to them by William Beauchamp, its owner: they advanced to Ware in their way to London, where they held a correspondence with the principal citizens: they were received without opposition into that capital; and finding now the great superiority of their force, they issued proclamations, requiring the other barons to join them; and menacing them, in case of refusal or delay, with committing devastation on their houses and estates^s. In order to shew what might be expected from their prosperous arms, they made incursions from London, and laid waste the king's parks and palaces; and all the barons, who had hitherto carried the semblance of supporting the royal party, were glad of this pretence for openly joining a cause which they always had secretly favoured. The king was left at Odiham in Hampshire, with a poor retinue of only seven knights; and after trying several expedients to elude the blow, after offering to refer all differences to the pope alone, or to eight barons, four to be chosen by himself, and four by the confederates^t, he found himself at last obliged to submit at discretion.

^r M. Paris, p. 177. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 71.

^s M. Paris, p. 177.

^t Rymer, vol. i. p. 200,

MAGNA CHARTA. JUNE 15.

A CONFERENCE between the king and the barons was appointed at Runnemede, between Windsor and Staines; a place which has ever since been extremely celebrated, on account of this great event. The two parties encamped apart, like open enemies; and after a debate of a few days, the king, with a facility somewhat suspicious, signed and sealed the charter which was required of him (June 19). This famous deed, commonly called the GREAT CHARTER, either granted or secured very important liberties and privileges to every order of men in the kingdom; to the clergy, to the barons, and to the people.

The freedom of elections was secured to the clergy: the former charter of the king was confirmed, by which the necessity of a royal *cong   d'elire* and confirmation was superseded: all check upon appeals to Rome was removed, by the allowance granted every man to depart the kingdom at pleasure: and the fines to be imposed on the clergy, for any offence, were ordained to be proportional to their lay estates, not to their ecclesiastical benefices.

The privileges granted to the barons were either abatements in the rigour of the feudal law, or determinations in points which had been left by that law, or had become, by practice, arbitrary and ambiguous. The reliefs of heirs suc-

ceeding to a military fee were ascertained; an earl's and baron's at a hundred marks, a knight's at a hundred shillings. It was ordained by the charter, that, if the heir be a minor, he shall, immediately upon his majority, enter upon his estate, without paying any relief: the king shall not sell his wardship: he shall levy only reasonable profits upon the estate, without committing waste, or hurting the property: he shall uphold the castles, houses, mills, parks, and ponds: and if he commit the guardianship of the estate to the sheriff or any other, he shall previously oblige them to find surety to the same purpose. During the minority of a baron, while his lands are in wardship, and are not in his own possession, no debt which he owes to the Jews shall bear any interest. Heirs shall be married without disparagement; and before the marriage be contracted, the nearest relations of the person shall be informed of it. A widow, without paying any relief, shall enter upon her dower, the third part of her husband's rents: she shall not be compelled to marry, so long as she chuses to continue single; she shall only give security never to marry without her lord's consent. The king shall not claim the wardship of any minor who holds lands by military tenure of a baron, on pretence that he also holds lands of the crown, by soccage or any other tenure. Scutages shall be estimated at the same rate as in the time of Henry I.; and no scutage or aid, except in the three general feudal cases,

the king's captivity, the knighting of his eldest son, and the marrying of his eldest daughter, shall be imposed but by the great council of the kingdom; the prelates, earls, and great barons, shall be called to this great council, each by a particular writ; the lesser barons by a general summons of the sheriff. The king shall not seize any baron's land for a debt to the crown, if the baron possesses as many goods and chattels as are sufficient to discharge the debt. No man shall be obliged to perform more service for his fee than he is bound to by his tenure. No governor or constable of a castle shall oblige any knight to give money for castle-guard, if the knight be willing to perform the service in person, or by another able-bodied man; and if the knight be in the field himself, by the king's command, he shall be exempted from all other service of this nature. No vassal shall be allowed to sell so much of his land as to incapacitate himself from performing his service to his lord.

These were the principal articles, calculated for the interest of the barons; and had the charter contained nothing farther, national happiness and liberty had been very little promoted by it, as it would only have tended to increase the power and independence of an order of men who were already too powerful, and whose yoke might have become more heavy on the people than even that of an absolute monarch. But the barons, who alone drew and imposed on the prince this memo-

rable charter, were necessitated to insert in it other causes of a more extensive and more beneficent nature: they could not expect the concurrence of the people, without comprehending, together with their own, the interests of inferior ranks of men; and all provisions which the barons, for their own sake, were obliged to make, in order to ensure the free and equitable administration of justice, tended directly to the benefit of the whole community. The following were the principal clauses of this nature.

It was ordained, that all the privileges and immunities above mentioned, granted to the barons against the king, should be extended by the barons to their inferior vassals. The king bound himself not to grant any writ, empowering a baron to levy aid from his vassals, except in the three feudal cases. One weight and one measure shall be established throughout the kingdom. Merchants shall be allowed to transact all business, without being exposed to any arbitrary tolls and impositions: they and all free men shall be allowed to go out of the kingdom and return to it at pleasure: London, and all cities and burghs, shall preserve their ancient liberties, immunities, and free customs: aids shall not be required of them but by the consent of the great council: no towns or individuals shall be obliged to make or support bridges but by ancient custom: the goods of every freeman shall be disposed of according to his will: if he die intestate, his heirs shall succeed

to them. No officer of the crown shall take any horses, carts, or wood, without the consent of the owner. The king's courts of justice shall be stationary, and shall no longer follow his person: They shall be open to every one; and justice shall no longer be sold, refused, or delayed by them. Circuits shall be regularly held every year: the inferior tribunals of justice, the county court, sheriff's turn, and court-leet, shall meet at their appointed time and place: the sheriffs shall be incapacitated to hold pleas of the crown; and shall not put any person upon his trial, from rumour or suspicion alone, but upon the evidence of lawful witnesses. No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or dispossessed of his free tenement and liberties, or outlawed, or banished, or any wise hurt or injured, unless by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land; and all who suffered otherwise, in this or the two former reigns, shall be restored to their rights and possessions. Every freeman shall be fined in proportion to his fault; and no fine shall be levied on him to his utter ruin: even a villain or rustic shall not, by any fine, be bereaved of his carts, ploughs, and implements of husbandry. This was the only article calculated for the interests of this body of men, probably at that time the most numerous in the kingdom.

It must be confessed, that the former articles of the Great Charter contain such mitigations and explanations of the feudal law as are reasonable

and equitable ; and that the latter involve all the chief outlines of a legal government, and provide for the equal distribution of justice and free enjoyment of property ; the great objects for which political society was at first founded by men, which the people have a perpetual and unalienable right to recal, and which no time, nor precedent, nor statute, nor positive institution, ought to deter them from keeping ever uppermost in their thoughts and attention. Though the provisions made by this charter might, conformably to the genius of the age, be esteemed too concise, and too bare of circumstances, to maintain the execution of its articles, in opposition to the chicanery of lawyers, supported by the violence of power ; time gradually ascertained the sense of all the ambiguous expressions ; and those generous barons, who first extorted this concession, still held their swords in their hands, and could turn them against those who dared on any pretence to depart from the original spirit and meaning of the grant. We may now, from the tenor of this charter, conjecture what those laws were of king Edward which the English nation, during so many generations, still desired, with such an obstinate perseverance, to have recalled and established. They were chiefly these latter articles of *Magna Charta* ; and the barons who, at the beginning of these commotions, demanded the revival of the Saxon laws, undoubtedly thought that they had sufficiently satisfied the people by procuring them this concession,

which comprehended the principal objects to which they had so long aspired. But what we are most to admire is, the prudence and moderation of those haughty nobles themselves, who were enraged by injuries, inflamed by opposition, and elated by a total victory over their sovereign. They were content, even in this plenitude of power, to depart from some articles of Henry I.'s charter, which they made the foundation of their demands, particularly from the abolition of wardships, a matter of the greatest importance; and they seem to have been sufficiently careful not to diminish too far the power and revenue of the crown. If they appear, therefore, to have carried other demands to too great a height, it can be ascribed only to the faithless and tyrannical character of the king himself, of which they had long had experience, and which, they foresaw, would, if they provided no farther security, lead him soon to infringe their new liberties, and revoke his own concessions. This alone gave birth to those other articles, seemingly exorbitant, which were added as a rampart for the safe-guard of the Great Charter.

The barons obliged the king to agree that London should remain in their hands, and the Tower be consigned to the custody of the primate, till the 15th of August ensuing, or till the execution of the several articles of the Great Charter^u. The better to ensure the same end, he

^u Rymer, vol. i. p. 201. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 73.

allowed them to chuse five-and-twenty members from their own body, as conservators of the public liberties ; and no bounds were set to the authority of these men either in extent or duration. If any complaint were made of a violation of the charter, whether attempted by the king, justiciaries, sheriffs or foresters, any four of these barons might admonish the king to redress the grievance : if satisfaction were not obtained, they could assemble the whole council of twenty-five ; who, in conjunction with the great council, were empowered to compel him to observe the charter ; and, in case of resistance, might levy war against him, attack his castles, and employ every kind of violence, except against his royal person, and that of his queen and children. All men throughout the kingdom were bound, under the penalty of confiscation, to swear obedience to the twenty-five barons ; and the freeholders of each county were to chuse twelve knights, who were to make report of such evil customs as required redress, conformably to the tenor of the Great Charter^w. The names of those conservators were, the Earls of Clare, Albemarle, Gloucester, Winchester, Hereford, Roger Bigod earl of Norfolk, Robert de Vere earl of Oxford, William Mareschal the

^w This seems a very strong proof that the house of commons was not then in being ; otherwise the knights and burgesses from the several countries could have given in to the lords a list of grievances, without so unusual an election.

younger, Robert Fitz-Walter, Gilbert de Clare, Eustace de Vescey, Gilbert Delaval, William de Moubray, Geoffrey de Say, Roger de Mombezou, William de Huntingfield, Robert de Ros, the constable of Chester, William de Aubenie, Richard de Perci, William Malet, John Fitz-Robert, William de Lanvalay, Hugh de Bigod, and Roger de Montfichet^x. These men were, by this convention, really invested with the sovereignty of the kingdom: they were rendered co-ordinate with the king, or rather superior to him, in the exercise of the executive power: and as there was no circumstance of government which, either directly or indirectly, might not bear a relation to the security or observance of the Great Charter, there could scarcely occur any incident in which they might not lawfully interpose their authority.

John seemed to submit passively to all these regulations, however injurious to majesty: he sent writs to all the sheriffs, ordering them to constrain every one to swear obedience to the twenty-five barons^y: he dismissed all his foreign forces: he pretended that his government was thenceforth to run in a new tenor, and be more indulgent to the liberty and independence of his people. But he only dissembled, till he should find a favourable opportunity for annulling all his concessions. The injuries and indignities which he had formerly suffered from the pope and the king of France, as

^x M. Paris, p. 181.

^y Ibid. p. 182.

they came from equals or superiors, seemed to make but small impression on him : but the sense of this perpetual and total subjection under his own rebellious vassals, sunk deep in his mind, and he was determined, at all hazards, to throw off so ignominious a slavery^a. He grew sullen, silent, and reserved : he shunned the society of his courtiers and nobles : he retired into the Isle of Wight, as if desirous of hiding his shame and confusion ; but in this retreat he meditated the most fatal vengeance against all his enemies^a. He secretly sent abroad his emissaries to enlist foreign soldiers, and to invite the rapacious Brabançons into his service, by the prospect of sharing the spoils of England, and reaping the forfeitures of so many opulent barons, who had incurred the guilt of rebellion by rising in arms against him^b : and he dispatched a messenger to Rome, in order to lay before the pope the Great Charter, which he had been compelled to sign, and to complain, before that tribunal, of the violence which had been imposed upon him^c.

Innocent, considering himself as feudal lord of the kingdom, was incensed at the temerity of the barons, who, though they pretended to appeal to his authority, had dared, without waiting for his consent, to impose such terms on a prince,

^a M. Paris, p. 183.

^a Ibid.

^b Ibid. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 72. Chron. Mailr. p. 189.

^c M. Paris, p. 183. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 73.

who, by resigning to the Roman pontiff his crown and independence, had placed himself immediately under the papal protection. He issued therefore, a bull, in which, from the plenitude of his apostolic power, and from the authority which God had committed to him, to build and destroy kingdoms, to plant and overthrow, he annulled and abrogated the whole charter, as unjust in itself, as obtained by compulsion, and as derogatory to the dignity of the apostolic see. He prohibited the barons from exacting the observance of it: he even prohibited the king himself from paying any regard to it: he absolved him and his subjects from all oaths which they had been constrained to take to that purpose: and he pronounced a general sentence of excommunication against every one who should persevere in maintaining such treasonable and iniquitous pretensions^d.

RENEWAL OF THE CIVIL WARS.

THE king, as his foreign forces arrived along with this bull, now ventured to take off the mask; and, under sanction of the pope's decree, recalled all the liberties which he had granted to his subjects, and which he had solemnly sworn to observe. But the spiritual weapon was found, upon trial, to carry less force with it than he had

^d Rymer, vol. i. p. 203, 204, 205, 208. M. Paris, p. 184, 185, 187.

reason from his own experience to apprehend. The primate refused to obey the pope in publishing the sentence of excommunication against the barons; and though he was cited to Rome, that he might attend a general council there assembled, and was suspended on account of his disobedience to the pope, and his secret correspondence with the king's enemies^c; though a new and particular sentence of excommunication was pronounced by name against the principal barons^f; John still found that his nobility and people, and even his clergy, adhered to the defence of their liberties, and to their combination against him: the sword of his foreign mercenaries was all he had to trust to for restoring his authority.

The barons, after obtaining the Great Charter, seem to have been lulled into a fatal security, and to have taken no rational measures, in case of the introduction of a foreign force, for re-assembling their armies. The king was, from the first, master of the field; and immediately laid siege to the castle of Rochester, which was obstinately defended by William de Aubenie, at the head of a hundred and forty knights with their retainers, but was at last reduced by famine. John, irritated with the resistance, intended to have hanged the governor and all the garrison; but, on the representation of William de Mauleon, who suggested to him

^c M. Paris, p. 189.

^f Rymer vol. i. p. 211. M. Paris, 192.

the danger of reprisals, he was content to sacrifice, in this barbarous manner, the inferior prisoners only². The captivity of William de Aubenie, the best officer among the confederated barons, was an irreparable loss to their cause ; and no regular opposition was thenceforth made to the progress of the royal arms. The ravenous and barbarous mercenaries, incited by a cruel and enraged prince, were let loose against the estates, tenants, manors, houses, parks of the barons, and spread devastation over the face of the kingdom. Nothing was to be seen but the flames of villages and castles reduced to ashes, the consternation and misery of the inhabitants, tortures exercised by the soldiery to make them reveal their concealed treasures, and reprisals no less barbarous committed by the barons and their partisans on the royal demesnes, and on the estates of such as still adhered to the crown. The king, marching through the whole extent of England, from Dover to Berwic, laid the provinces waste on each side of him ; and considered every state, which was not his immediate property, as entirely hostile, and the object of military execution. The nobility of the north, in particular, who had shewn greatest violence in the recovery of their liberties, and who, acting in a separate body, had expressed their discontent even at the concessions made by the Great Charter, as they could expect no mercy, fled before him with their

² M. Paris, p. 187.

wives and families, and purchased the friendship of Alexander, the young king of Scots, by doing homage to him.

PRINCE LEWIS CALLED OVER.

THE barons, reduced to this desperate extremity, and menaced with the total loss of their liberties, their properties, and their lives, employed a remedy no less desperate; and making applications to the court of France, they offered to acknowledge Lewis, the eldest son of Philip, for their sovereign, on condition that he would afford them protection from the violence of their enraged prince. Though the sense of the common rights of mankind, the only rights that are entirely indefeasible, might have justified them in the deposition of their King, they declined insisting before Philip on a pretension which is commonly so disagreeable to sovereigns, and which sounds harshly in their royal ears. They affirmed that John was incapable of succeeding to the crown, by reason of the attainder passed upon him during his brother's reign; though that attainder had been reversed, and Richard had even, by his last will, declared him his successor. They pretended that he was already legally deposed by sentence of the peers of France, on account of the murder of his nephew; though that sentence could not possibly regard any thing but his transmarine dominions, which alone he held in vassalage to that crown. On

more plausible grounds they affirmed, that he had already deposed himself by doing homage to the pope, changing the nature of his sovereignty, and resigning an independent crown for a fee under a foreign power. And as Blanche of Castile, the wife of Lewis, was descended by her mother from Henry II. they maintained, though many other princes stood before her in the order of succession, that they had not shaken off the royal family, in chusing her husband for their sovereign.

Philip was strongly tempted to lay hold on the rich prize which was offered to him. The legate menaced him with interdicts and excommunications if he invaded the patrimony of St. Peter, or attacked a prince who was under the immediate protection of the holy see^h: but as Philip was assured of the obedience of his own vassals, his principles were changed with the times, and he now undervalued as much all papal censures, as he formerly pretended to pay respect to them. His chief scruple was with regard to the fidelity which he might expect from the English barons in their new engagements, and the danger of entrusting his son and heir into the hands of men who might, on any caprice or necessity, make peace with their native sovereign, by sacrificing a pledge of so much value. He therefore exacted from the barons twenty-five hostages of the most noble birth in the kingdomⁱ; and having obtained

^h M. Paris, p. 194. M. West. p. 275.

ⁱ M. Paris, p. 193. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 74.

this security, he sent over first a small army to the relief of the confederates; then more numerous forces, which arrived with Lewis himself at their head.

The first effect of the young prince's appearance in England was the desertion of John's foreign troops, who, being mostly levied in Flanders, and other provinces of France, refused to serve against the heir of their monarchy^k. The Gascons and Poitevins alone, who were still John's subjects, adhered to his cause; but they were too weak to maintain that superiority in the field which they had hitherto supported against the confederated barons. Many considerable noblemen deserted John's party, the earls of Salisbury, Arundel, Warrenne, Oxford, Albemarle, and William Mareschal the younger: his castles fell daily into the hands of the enemy; Dover was the only place which, from the valour and fidelity of Hubert de Burgh the governor, made resistance to the progress of Lewis¹: and the barons had the melancholy prospect of finally succeeding in their purpose, and of escaping the tyranny of their own king, by imposing on themselves and the nation a foreign yoke. But this union was of short duration between the French and English nobles; and the imprudence of Lewis, who on every occasion showed too visible a preference to the former, increased that jealousy which it was so natural

^k M. Paris, p. 195.

¹ Ibid. p. 198. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 75, 76.

for the latter to entertain in their present situation^m. The viscount of Melun too, it is said, one of his courtiers, fell sick at London, and finding the approaches of death, he sent for some of his friends among the English barons, and, warning them of their danger, revealed Lewis's secret intentions of exterminating them and their families as traitors to their prince, and of bestowing their estates and dignities on his native subjects, in whose fidelity he could more reasonably place confidenceⁿ: this story, whether true or false, was universally reported and believed; and, concurring with other circumstances which rendered it credible, did great prejudice to the cause of Lewis. The earl of Salisbury, and other noblemen, deserted again to John's party^o; and as men easily change sides in a civil war, especially where their power is founded on an hereditary and independent authority, and is not derived from the opinion and favour of the people, the French prince had reason to dread a sudden reverse of fortune. The king was assembling a considerable army, with a view of fighting one great battle for his crown; but passing from Lynne to Lincolnshire, his road lay along the sea-shore, which was overflowed at high water; and not chusing the proper time for his journey, he lost in the inundation all his carriages, treasure, baggage, and

^m W. Heming. p. 559.

ⁿ M. Paris, p. 199. M. West. p. 277.

^o Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 78.

regalia. The affliction for this disaster, and vexation from the distracted state of his affairs, increased the sickness under which he then laboured; and though he reached the castle of Newark, he was obliged to halt there, and his distemper soon after put an end to his life, 17th Oct. in the forty-ninth year of his age, and eighteenth of his reign; and freed the nation from the dangers to which it was equally exposed by his success or by his misfortunes.

CHARACTER OF THE KING.

THE character of this prince is nothing but a complication of vices, equally mean and odious; ruinous to himself, and destructive to his people. Cowardice, inactivity, folly, levity, licentiousness, ingratitude, treachery, tyranny, and cruelty; all these qualities appear too evidently in the several incidents of his life, to give us room to suspect that the disagreeable picture has been anywise over-charged by the prejudices of the ancient historians. It is hard to say whether his conduct to his father, his brother, his nephew, or his subjects, was most culpable; or whether his crimes, in these respects, were not even exceeded by the baseness which appeared in his transactions with the king of France, the pope, and the barons. His European dominions, when they devolved to him by the death of his brother, were more ex-

tensive than have ever, since his time, been ruled by an English monarch: but he first lost, by his misconduct, the flourishing provinces in France, the ancient patrimony of his family: he subjected his kingdom to a shameful vassalage under the see of Rome: he saw the prerogatives of his crown diminished by law, and still more reduced by faction: and he died at last, when in danger of being totally expelled by a foreign power, and of either ending his life miserably in prison, or seeking shelter as a fugitive from the pursuit of his enemies.

The prejudices against this prince were so violent, that he was believed to have sent an embassy to the Miramoulin or emperor of Morocco, and to have offered to change his religion and become Mahometan, in order to purchase the protection of that monarch. But though this story is told us, on plausible authority, by Matthew Paris^p, it is in itself utterly improbable; except that there is nothing so incredible but may be believed to proceed from the folly and wickedness of John.

The monks throw great reproaches on this prince for his impiety and even infidelity; and as an instance of it, they tell us, that having one day caught a very fat stag, he exclaimed, *How plump and well fed is this animal! and yet I dare swear he never heard mass*^q. This sally of wit, upon the usual corpulency of the priests, more than all his

^p P. 169.

^q M. Paris, p. 170.

enormous crimes and iniquities, made him pass with them for an atheist.

John left two legitimate sons behind him, Henry, born on the first of October 1207, and now nine years of age ; and Richard, born on the sixth of January 1209 : and three daughters, Jane, afterwards married to Alexander king of Scots ; Eleanor, married first to William Mareschal the younger, earl of Pembroke, and then to Simon Mountfort, earl of Leicester ; and Isabella, married to the emperor Frederic II. All these children were born to him by Isabella of Angoulesme his second wife. His illegitimate children were numerous ; but none of them were anywise distinguished.

It was this king who, in the ninth year of his reign, first gave by charter to the city of London, the right of electing annually a mayor out of its own body, an office which was till now held for life. He gave the city also power to elect and remove its sheriffs at pleasure, and its common-council-men annually. London-bridge was finished in this reign : the former bridge was of wood. Maud the empress was the first that built a stone bridge in England.

APPENDIX II.

THE FEUDAL AND ANGLO-NORMAN GOVERNMENT AND MANNERS.

Origin of the Feudal Law Its Progress Feudal Government of England The Feudal Parliament The Commons Judicial Power Revenue of the Crown Commerce The Church Civil Laws Manners.

THE feudal law is the chief foundation, both of the political government and of the jurisprudence established by the Normans in England. Our subject therefore requires that we should form a just idea of this law, in order to explain the state as well of that kingdom as of all other kingdoms of Europe, which during those ages were governed by similar institutions. And though I am sensible that I must here repeat many observations and reflections which have been communicated by others^r; yet, as every book, agreeably to the observation of a great historian^s, should be as complete as possible within itself, and should never refer for any thing material to other books, it will be necessary in this place to deliver a short

^r *L'Esprit de Loix.* Dr. Robertson's *History of Scotland.*

^s Padre Paolo *Hist. Conc. Trid.*

plan of that prodigious fabric which for several centuries preserved such a mixture of liberty and oppression, order and anarchy, stability and revolution, as was never experienced in any other age, or any other part of the world.

ORIGIN OF THE FEUDAL LAW.

AFTER the northern nations had subdued the provinces of the Roman empire, they were obliged to establish a system of government which might secure their conquests, as well against the revolt of their numerous subjects who remained in the provinces, as from the inroads of other tribes, who might be tempted to ravish from them their new acquisitions. The great change of circumstances made them here depart from those institutions which prevailed among them while they remained in the forests of Germany; yet was it still natural for them to retain, in their present settlement, as much of their antient customs as was compatible with their new situation.

The German governments, being more a confederacy of independent warriors than a civil subjection, derived their principal force from many inferior and voluntary associations, which individuals formed under a particular head or chieftain, and which it became the highest point of honour to maintain with inviolable fidelity. The glory of the chief consisted in the number, the bravery,

and the zealous attachment of his retainers : the duty of the retainers required that they should accompany their chief in all wars and dangers, that they should fight and perish by his side, and that they should esteem his renown or his favour a sufficient recompence for all their services¹. The prince himself was nothing but a great chieftain, who was chosen from among the rest on account of his superior valour or nobility ; and who derived his power from the voluntary association or attachment of the other chieftains.

When a tribe, governed by these ideas, and actuated by these principles, subdued a large territory, they found that though it was necessary to keep themselves in a military posture, they could neither remain united in a body, nor take up their quarters in several garrisons, and that their manners and institutions debarred them from using these expedients ; the obvious ones, which in a like situation would have been employed by a more civilized nation. Their ignorance in the art of finances, and perhaps the devastations inseparable from such violent conquests, rendered it impracticable for them to levy taxes sufficient for the pay of numerous armies ; and their repugnance to subordination, with their attachment to rural pleasures, made the life of the camp or garrison, if perpetuated during peaceful times, extremely odious and disgustful to them. They

¹ Tacit. de Mor. Germ.

seized, therefore, such a portion of the conquered lands as appeared necessary ; they assigned a share for supporting the dignity of their prince and government ; they distributed other parts, under the title of fiefs, to the chiefs ; these made a new partition among their retainers ; the express condition of all these grants was, that they might be resumed at pleasure, and that the possessor, so long as he enjoyed them, should still remain in readiness to take the field for the defence of the nation. And though the conquerors immediately separated, in order to enjoy their new acquisitions, their martial disposition made them readily fulfil the terms of their engagement : they assembled on the first alarm ; their habitual attachment to the chieftain made them willingly submit to his command ; and thus a regular military force, though concealed, was always ready to defend, on any emergence, the interest and honour of the community.

We are not to imagine that all the conquered lands were seized by the northern conquerors ; or that the whole of the land thus seized was subjected to those military services. This supposition is confuted by the history of all the nations on the continent. Even the idea given us of the German manners by the Roman historian, may convince us that that bold people would never have been content with so precarious a subsistence, or have fought to procure establishments which were only to continue during the good pleasure of their

sovereign. Though the northern chieftains accepted of lands which, being considered as a kind of military pay, might be resumed at the will of the king or general ; they also took possession of estates which, being hereditary and independent, enabled them to maintain their native liberty, and support, without court-favour, the honour of their rank and family.

PROGRESS OF THE FEUDAL LAW.

BUT there is a great difference, in the consequences, between the distribution of a pecuniary subsistence, and the assignment of lands burthened with the condition of military service. The delivery of the former at the weekly, monthly, or annual terms of payment, still recalls the idea of a voluntary gratuity from the prince, and reminds the soldier of the precarious tenure by which he holds his commission. But the attachment, naturally formed with a fixed portion of land, gradually begets the idea of something like property, and makes the possessor forget his dependent situation, and the condition which was at first annexed to the grant. It seemed equitable, that one who had cultivated and sowed a field should reap the harvest : hence fiefs, which were at first entirely precarious, were soon made annual. A man who had employed his money in building, planting, or other improvements, expected to

reap the fruits of his labour or expence: hence they were next granted during a term of years. It would be thought hard to expel a man from his possessions who had always done his duty, and performed the conditions on which he originally received them: hence the chieftains, in a subsequent period, thought themselves entitled to demand the enjoyment of their feudal lands during life. It was found, that a man would more willingly expose himself in battle, if assured that his family should inherit his possessions, and should not be left by his death in want and poverty: hence fiefs were made hereditary in families, and descended, during one age, to the son, then to the grandson, next to the brothers, and afterwards to more distant relations^u. The idea of property stole in gradually upon that of military pay; and each century made some sensible addition to the stability of fiefs and tenures.

In all these successive acquisitions, the chief was supported by his vassals; who, having originally a strong connection with him, augmented by the constant intercourse of good offices, and by the friendship arising from vicinity and dependence, were inclined to follow their leader against all his enemies, and voluntarily, in his private quarrels, paid him the same obedience to which, by their tenure, they were bound in foreign wars. While he daily advanced new pretensions to se-

^u Lib. Feud. lib. 1. tit. 1.

cure the possession of his superior fief, they expected to find the same advantage, in acquiring stability to their subordinate ones; and they zealously opposed the intrusion of a new lord, who would be inclined, as he was fully intitled, to bestow the possession of their lands on his own favourites and retainers. Thus the authority of the sovereign gradually decayed; and each noble, fortified in his own territory by the attachment of his vassals, became too powerful to be expelled by an order from the throne; and he secured by law what he had at first acquired by usurpation.

During this precarious state of the supreme power, a difference would immediately be experienced between those portions of territory which were subjected to the feudal tenures, and those which were possessed by an allodial or free title. Though the latter possessions had at first been esteemed much preferable, they were soon found, by the progressive changes introduced into public and private law, to be of an inferior condition to the former. The possessors of a feudal territory, united by a regular subordination under one chief, and by the mutual attachments of the vassals, had the same advantages over the proprietors of the other, that a disciplined army enjoys over a dispersed multitude; and were enabled to commit with impunity all injuries on their defenceless neighbours. Every one, therefore, hastened to seek that protection which he found so necessary; and each allodial proprietor, resigning his posses-

sions into the hands of the king, or of some nobleman respected for power or valour, received them back with the condition of feudal services^w, which, though a burden somewhat grievous, brought him ample compensation, by connecting him with the neighbouring proprietors, and placing him under the guardianship of a potent chieftain. The decay of the political government thus necessarily occasioned the extension of the feudal: the kingdoms of Europe were universally divided into baronies, and these into inferior fiefs: and the attachment of vassals to their chief, which was at first an essential part of the German manners, was still supported by the same causes from which it at first arose; the necessity of mutual protection, and the continued intercourse, between the head and the members, of benefits and services.

But there was another circumstance which corroborated these feudal dependencies, and tended to connect the vassals with their superior lord by an indissoluble bond of union. The northern conquerors, as well as the more early Greeks and Romans, embraced a policy, which is unavoidable to all nations that have made slender advances in refinement: they every where united the civil jurisdiction with the military power. Law, in its commencement, was not an intricate science, and was more governed by maxims of equity, which seem obvious to common sense,

^w Marculf. Form. 47. apud Lindenbr. p. 1238.

than by numerous and subtile principles, applied to a variety of cases by profound reasonings from analogy. An officer, though he had passed his life in the field, was able to determine all legal controversies which could occur within the district committed to his charge; and his decisions were the most likely to meet with a prompt and ready obedience, from men who respected his person, and were accustomed to act under his command. The profit arising from punishments, which were then chiefly pecuniary, was another reason for his desiring to retain the judicial power; and when his fief became hereditary, this authority, which was essential to it, was also transmitted to his posterity. The counts and other magistrates, whose power was merely official, were tempted in imitation of the feudal lords, whom they resembled in so many particulars, to render their dignity perpetual and hereditary; and in the decline of the regal power, they found no difficulty in making good their pretensions. After this manner the vast fabric of feudal subordination became quite solid and comprehensive; it formed every where an essential part of the political constitution; and the Norman and other barons, who followed the fortunes of William, were so accustomed to it that they could scarcely form an idea of any other species of civil government^x.

^x The ideas of the feudal government were so rooted, that even lawyers, in those ages, could not form a notion of any other con-

The Saxons who conquered England, as they exterminated the ancient inhabitants, and thought themselves secured by the sea against new invaders, found it less requisite to maintain themselves in a military posture: the quantity of land which they annexed to offices seems to have been of small value; and for that reason continued the longer in its original situation, and was always possessed during pleasure by those who were intrusted with the command. These conditions were too precarious to satisfy the Norman barons, who enjoyed more independent possessions and jurisdictions in their own country; and William was obliged, in the new distribution of land, to copy the tenures, which were now become universal on the continent. England of a sudden became a feudal kingdom^y; and received all the advantages, and was exposed to all the inconveniencies, incident to that species of civil polity.

THE FEUDAL GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND.

ACCORDING to the principles of the feudal law, the king was the supreme lord of the landed property: all possessors who enjoyed the fruits or revenue of any part of it, held those privileges, either mediately or immediately, of him; and

stitution. *Regnum* (says Bracton, lib. 2, cap. 34), *quod ex comitatibus et baronibus dicitur esse constitutum*.

^y Coke Comm. on Lit. p. 1; 2. ad sect. 1.

their property was conceived to be, in some degree, conditional². The land was still apprehended to be a species of *benefice* which was the original conception of a feudal property; and the vassal owed, in return for it, stated services to his baron, as the baron himself did for his land to the crown. The vassal was obliged to defend his baron in war; and the baron, at the head of his vassals, was bound to fight in defence of the king and kingdom. But besides these military services, which were casual, there were others imposed of a civil nature, which were more constant and durable.

The northern nations had no idea, that any man, trained up to honour, and inured to arms, was ever to be governed, without his own consent, by the absolute will of another; or that the administration of justice was ever to be exercised by the private opinion of any one magistrate, without the concurrence of some other persons, whose interest might induce them to check his arbitrary and iniquitous decisions. The king, therefore, when he found it necessary to demand any service of his barons or chief tenants, beyond what was due by their tenures, was obliged to assemble them, in order to obtain their *consent*: and when it was necessary to determine any controversy which might arise among the barons themselves, the question must be discussed in their presence,

² Somner of Gavelk, p. 109. Smith de Rep. lib. 3. cap. 10.

and be decided according to their opinion or *advice*. In these two circumstances of consent and advice, consisted chiefly the civil services of the ancient barons ; and these implied all the considerable incidents of government. In one view the barons regarded this attendance as their principal *privilege* ; in another, as a grievous *burden*. That no momentous affairs could be transacted without their consent and advice, was in general esteemed the great security of their possessions and dignities : but as they reaped no immediate profit from their attendance at court, and were exposed to great inconvenience and charge by an absence from their own estates, every one was glad to exempt himself from each *particular* exertion of this power ; and was pleased both that the call for that duty should seldom return upon him, and that others should undergo the burden in his stead. The king, on the other hand, was usually anxious, for several reasons, that the assembly of the barons should be full at every stated or casual meeting : this attendance was the chief badge of their subordination to his crown, and drew them from that independence which they were apt to affect in their own castles and manors ; and where the meeting was thin or ill attended, its determinations had less authority, and commanded not so ready an obedience from the whole community.

The case was the same with the barons in their courts, as with the king in the supreme council of the nation. It was requisite to assemble the vas-

sals, in order to determine by their vote any question which regarded the barony; and they sat along with the chief in all trials, whether civil or criminal, which occurred within the limits of their jurisdiction. They were bound to pay suit and service at the court of their baron; and as their tenure was military, and consequently honourable, they were admitted into his society, and partook of his friendship. Thus, a kingdom was considered only as a great barony, and a barony as a small kingdom. The barons were peers to each other in the national council, and, in some degree, companions to the king: the vassals were peers to each other in the court of barony, and companions to their baron^a.

But though this resemblance so far took place, the vassals, by the natural course of things, universally, in the feudal constitutions, fell into a greater subordination under the baron, than the baron himself under his sovereign; and these governments had a necessary and infallible tendency to augment the power of the nobles. The great chief, residing in his country-seat, which he was commonly allowed to fortify, lost, in a great measure, his connection or acquaintance with the prince; and added every day new force to his authority over the vassals of the barony. They received from him education in all military exercises: his hospitality invited them to live and

^a Du Cang. Gloss. in verb. *Par.* Cujac. Commun. in Lib. Feud. lib. i. tit. p. 18. Spelm. Gloss. in verb.

enjoy society in his hall: their leisure, which was great, made them perpetual retainers on his person, and partakers of his country sports and amusements: they had no means of gratifying their ambition but by making a figure in his train: his favour and countenance was their greatest honour: his displeasure exposed them to contempt and ignominy: and they felt every moment the necessity of his protection, both in the controversies which occurred with other vassals, and, what was more material, in the daily inroads and injuries which were committed by the neighbouring barons. During the time of general war, the sovereign, who marched at the head of his armies, and was the great protector of the state, always acquired some accession to his authority, which he lost during the intervals of peace and tranquillity: but the loose police, incident to the feudal constitutions, maintained a perpetual, though secret hostility, between the several members of the state; and the vassals found no means of securing themselves against the injuries to which they were continually exposed, but by closely adhering to their chief, and falling into a submissive dependence upon him.

If the feudal government was so little favourable to the true liberty even of the military vassal, it was still more destructive of the independence and security of the other members of the state, or what, in a proper sense, we call the people. A great part of them were *serfs*, and lived in a state

of absolute slavery or villainage: the other inhabitants of the country paid their rent in services, which were in a great measure arbitrary; and they could expect no redress of injuries, in a court of barony, from men who thought they had a right to oppress and tyrannise over them: the towns were situated either within the demesnes of the king or the lands of the great barons, and were almost entirely subjected to the absolute will of their master. The languishing state of commerce kept the inhabitants poor and contemptible; and the political institutions were calculated to render that poverty perpetual. The barons and gentry, living in rustic plenty and hospitality, gave no encouragement to the arts, and had no demand for any of the more elaborate manufactures: every profession was held in contempt but that of arms: and if any merchant or manufacturer rose by industry and frugality to a degree of opulence, he found himself but the more exposed to injuries, from the envy and avidity of the military nobles.

These concurring causes gave the feudal governments so strong a bias towards aristocracy, that the royal authority was extremely eclipsed in all the European states; and, instead of dreading the growth of monarchical power, we might rather expect that the community would every where crumble into so many independent baronies, and lose the political union by which they were cemented. In elective monarchies, the event was

commonly answerable to this expectation ; and the barons, gaining ground on every vacancy of the throne, raised themselves almost to a state of sovereignty, and sacrificed to their power both the rights of the crown and the liberties of the people. But hereditary monarchies had a principle of authority which was not so easily subverted ; and there were several causes which still maintained a degree of influence in the hands of the sovereign.

The greatest baron could never lose view entirely of those principles of the feudal constitution which bound him, as a vassal, to submission and fealty towards his prince ; because he was every moment obliged to have recourse to those principles, in exacting fealty and submission from his own vassals. The lesser barons, finding that the annihilation of royal authority left them exposed, without protection, to the insults and injuries of more potent neighbours, naturally adhered to the crown, and promoted the execution of general and equal laws. The people had still a stronger interest to desire the grandeur of the sovereign ; and the king, being the legal magistrate, who suffered by every internal convulsion or oppression, and who regarded the great nobles as his immediate rivals, assumed the salutary office of general guardian or protector of the commons. Besides the prerogatives with which the law invested him, his large demesnes and numerous retainers rendered him, in one sense, the greatest baron in his kingdom ; and where he was

possessed of personal vigour and abilities (for his situation required these advantages), he was commonly able to preserve his authority, and maintain his station as head of the community, and the chief fountain of law and justice.

The first kings of the Norman race were favoured by another circumstance which preserved them from the encroachments of their barons. They were generals of a conquering army, which was obliged to continue in a military posture, and to maintain great subordination under their leader, in order to secure themselves from the revolt of the numerous natives, whom they had bereaved of all their properties and privileges. But though this circumstance supported the authority of William and his immediate successors, and rendered them extremely absolute, it was lost as soon as the Norman barons began to incorporate with the nation, to acquire a security in their possessions, and to fix their influence over their vassals, tenants, and slaves. And the immense fortunes which the Conqueror had bestowed on his chief captains, served to support their independence, and make them formidable to the sovereign.

He gave, for instance, to Hugh de Abrincis, his sister's son, the whole county of Chester, which he erected into a palatinate, and rendered by his grant almost independent of the crown^b. Robert earl of Mortaigne had 973 manors and

^b Camd. in Chesh. Spel. Gloss. in verb. *Comes Palatinus*.

lordships : Allan earl of Britanny and Richmond 442 : Odo bishop of Baieux 439^c : Geoffrey bishop of Coutance 280^d : Walter Giffard earl of Buckingham 107 : William earl Warrenne 298, besides 28 towns or hamlets in Yorkshire : Tode-nei 81 : Roger Bigod 123 : Robert earl of Eu 119 : Roger Mortimer 132, besides several hamlets : Robert de Stafford 130 : Walter de Eurus earl of Salisbury 46 : Geoffrey de Mandeville 118 : Richard de Clare 171 : Hugh de Beauchamp 47 : Baldwin de Ridvers 164 : Henry de Ferrars 222 : William de Percy 119^e : Norman d'Arcy 33^f. Sir Henry Spelman computes, that in the large county of Norfolk, there were not, in the Conqueror's time, above sixty-six proprietors of land^g. Men, possessed of such princely revenues and jurisdictions, could not long be retained in the rank of subjects. The great earl of Warrenne, in a subsequent reign, when he was questioned concerning his right to the lands which he possessed, drew his sword, which he produced as his title ; adding that William the Bastard did not conquer the kingdom himself ; but that the barons, and

^c Brady's Hist. p. 198, 200.

^d Order. Vital.

^e Dugdale's Baronage, from Domesday Book, vol. i. p. 60, 74. iii. 112, 132, 136, 138, 156, 174, 200, 207, 223, 254, 257, 269.

^f Ibid. 369. It is remarkable that this family of d'Arcy seems to be the only male descendants of any of the conqueror's barons now remaining among the peers. Lord Holderness is the heir of that family.

^g Spel. Gloss. in verb. *Domesday*.

his ancestor among the rest, were joint adventurers in the enterprise^h.

THE FEUDAL PARLIAMENT.

THE supreme legislative power of England was lodged in the king and great council, or what was afterwards called the parliament. It is not doubted but the archbishops, bishops, and most considerable abbots, were constituent members of this council. They sat by a double title: by prescription, as having always possessed that privilege, through the whole Saxon period, from the first establishment of Christianity; and by their right of baronage, as holding of the king *in capite* by military service. These two titles of the prelates were never accurately distinguished. When the usurpations of the church had risen to such a height, as to make the bishops affect a separate dominion, and regard their seat in parliament as a degradation of their episcopal dignity; the king insisted that they were barons, and, on that account, obliged by the general principles of the feudal law, to attend on him in his great councilsⁱ. Yet there still remained some practices, which supposed their title to be derived merely from ancient possession: when a bishop was elected, he sat in parliament before the king

^h Dug. Bar. vol. i. p. 79. Ibid. Origines Juridicales, p. 13.

ⁱ Spel. Gloss. in verb. *Baro*.

had made him restitution of his temporalities ; and during the vacancy of a see, the guardian of the spiritualities was summoned to attend along with the bishops.

The barons were another constituent part of the great council of the nation. These held immediately of the crown by a military tenure : they were the most honourable members of the state, and had a *right* to be consulted in all public deliberations : they were the immediate vassals of the crown, and owed as a *service* their attendance in the court of their supreme lord. A resolution taken without their consent was likely to be but ill executed : and no determination of any cause or controversy among them had any validity, where the vote and advice of the body did not concur. The dignity of earl or count was official and territorial, as well as hereditary ; and as all the earls were also barons, they were considered as military vassals of the crown, were admitted in that capacity into the general council, and formed the most honourable and powerful branch of it.

But there was another class of the immediate military tenants of the crown, no less, or probably more numerous than the barons, the tenants *in capite* by knights service ; and these, however inferior in power or property, held by a tenure which was equally honourable with that of the others. A barony was commonly composed of several knights fees : and though the number seems not to have been exactly defined, seldom

consisted of less than fifty hydes of land^k: but where a man held of the king only one or two knights fees, he was still an immediate vassal of the crown, and as such had a title to have a seat in the general councils. But as this attendance was usually esteemed a burthen, and one too great for a man of slender fortune to bear constantly; it is probable that, though he had a title, if he pleased to be admitted, he was not obliged, by any penalty, like the barons, to pay a regular attendance. All the immediate military tenants of the crown amounted not fully to 700, when Domesday-book was framed; and as the members were well pleased, on any pretext, to excuse themselves from attendance, the assembly was never likely to become too numerous for the dispatch of public business.

THE COMMONS.

So far the nature of a general council, or ancient parliament, is determined without any doubt or controversy. The only question seems to be with regard to the commons, or the represent-

^k Four hydes made one knight's fee: the relief of a barony was twelve times greater than that of a knight's fee; whence we may conjecture its usual value. Spelm. Gloss. in verb. *Feodum*. There were 243,600 hydes in England, and 60,215 knights fees; whence it is evident that there were a little more than four hydes in each knight's fee.

atives of counties and boroughs; whether they were also, in more early times, constituent parts of parliament? This question was once disputed in England with great acrimony: but such is the force of time and evidence, that they can sometimes prevail even over faction; and the question seems, by general consent and even by their own, to be at last determined against the ruling party. It is agreed, that the commons were no part of the great council, till some ages after the Conquest; and that the military tenants alone of the crown composed that supreme and legislative assembly.

The vassals of a baron were by their tenure immediately dependant on him, owed attendance at his court, and paid all their duty to the king, through that dependance which their lord was obliged by *his* tenure to acknowledge to his sovereign and superior. Their land, comprehended in the barony, was represented in parliament by the baron himself, who was supposed, according to the fictions of the feudal law, to possess the direct property of it, and it would have been deemed incongruous to give it any other representation. They stood in the same capacity to him, that he and the other barons did to the king: the former were peers of the barony; the latter were peers of the realm: the vassals possessed a subordinate rank within their district; the baron enjoyed a superior dignity in the great assembly: they were in some degree his companions at

home; he the king's companion at court: and nothing can be more evidently repugnant to all feudal ideas, and to that gradual subordination which was essential to those ancient institutions, than to imagine that the king would apply either for the advice or consent of men, who were of a rank so much inferior, and whose duty was immediately paid to the *mesne* lord that was interposed between them and the throne¹.

If it be unreasonable to think that the vassals of a barony, though their tenure was military and noble and honourable, were ever summoned to give their opinion in national councils, much less can it be supposed, that the tradesmen or inhabitants of boroughs, whose condition was so much inferior, would be admitted to that privilege. It appears from Domesday, that the greatest boroughs were, at the time of the Conquest, scarcely more than country villages; and that the inhabitants lived in entire dependance on the king and great lords, and were of a station little better than servile^m. They were not then so much as incorporated; they formed no community; were not regarded as a body politic; and being really nothing but a number of low dependent tradesmen, living without any particular civil tie, in neighbourhood together, they were incapable of being represented in the states of the kingdom. Even

¹ Spelm. Gloss. in verb. *Baro*.

^m *Liber homo* anciently signified a gentleman: for scarce any one beside was entirely free. Spelm. Gloss. in verbo.

in France, a country which made more early advances in arts and civility than in England, the first corporation is sixty years posterior to the conquest under the duke of Normandy; and the erecting of these communities was an invention of Lewis the Gross, in order to free the people from slavery under the lords, and to give them protection by means of certain privileges and a separate jurisdictionⁿ. An ancient French writer calls them a new and wicked device, to procure liberty to slaves, and encourage them in shaking off the dominion of their masters^o. The famous charter, as it is called, of the Conqueror to the city of London, though granted at a time when he assumed the appearance of gentleness and lenity, is nothing but a letter of protection, and a declaration that the citizens should not be treated as slaves^p. By the English feudal law, the superior lord was prohibited from marrying his female ward to a burgess or a villain^q; so near were these two ranks esteemed to each other, and so much inferior to the nobility and gentry. Besides possessing the advantages of birth, riches, civil powers and privileges, the nobles and gentlemen alone were armed, a circumstance which gave them a mighty superiority, in an age when nothing but the military profession was honour-

ⁿ Du Cange's Gloss. in verb. *Commune*, *Communitas*.

^o Guibertus de vita sua lib. ii. cap. 7.

^p Stat. of Merton, 1235. cap. 6.

^q Hollingshed, vol. iii. p. 15.

able, and when the loose execution of laws gave so much encouragement to open violence, and rendered it so decisive in all disputes and controversies ^r.

The great similarity among the feudal governments of Europe is well known to every man that has any acquaintance with ancient history; and the antiquaries of all foreign countries, where the question was never embarrassed by party disputes, have allowed, that the commons came very late to be admitted to a share in the legislative power. In Normandy particularly, whose constitution was most likely to be William's model in raising his new fabric of English government, the states were entirely composed of the clergy and nobility; and the first incorporated boroughs or communities of that dutchy were Roüen and Falaise, which enjoyed their privileges by a grant of Philip Augustus in the year 1207 ^s. All the ancient English historians, when they mention the great council of the nation, call it an assembly of the baronage, nobility, or great men; and none of their expressions, though several hundred passages might be produced, can, without the utmost violence, be tortured to a meaning which will admit the commons to be constituent members of that body ^t. If in the long period of 200

^r Madox's Baron. Angl. p. 19.

^s Norman. Du Chesnii, p. 1066. Du Cange, Gloss. in verb. *Commune*.

^t Sometimes the historians mention the people, *populus*, as a part of the parliament; but they always mean the laity, in oppo-

years, which elapsed between the Conquest and the latter end of Henry III. and which abounded in factions, revolutions, and convulsions of all kinds, the house of commons never performed one single legislative act so considerable as to be once mentioned by any of the numerous historians of that age, they must have been totally insignificant: and in that case, what reason can be assigned for their ever being assembled? Can it be supposed, that men of so little weight or importance possessed a negative voice against the king and the barons? Every page of the subsequent histories discovers their existence; though these histories are not written with greater accuracy than the preceding ones, and indeed scarcely equal them in that particular. The *Magna Charta* of king John provides, that no scutage or aid should be imposed, either on the land or towns,

sition to the clergy. Sometimes the word *communitas* is found: but it always means *communitas baronagii*. These points are clearly proved by Dr. Brady. There is also mention sometimes made of a crowd or multitude that thronged into the great council on particular interesting occasions; but as deputies from boroughs are never once spoke of, the proof that they had not then any existence, becomes the more certain and undeniable. These never could make a crowd, as they must have had a regular place assigned them, if they had made a regular part of the legislative body. There were only 130 boroughs who received writs of summons from Edward I. It is expressly said in *Gesta Reg. Steph.* p. 932. that it was usual for the populace, *vulgus*, to crowd into the great councils; where they were plainly mere spectators, and could only gratify their curiosity.

but by consent of the great council ; and for more security, it enumerates the persons entitled to a seat in that assembly, the prelates and immediate tenants of the crown, without any mention of the commons : an authority so full, certain, and explicit, that nothing but the zeal of party could ever have procured credit to any contrary hypothesis.

It was probably the example of the French barons which first emboldened the English to require greater independence from their sovereign : it is also probable, that the boroughs and corporations of England were established in imitation of those of France. It may, therefore, be proposed as no unlikely conjecture, that both the chief privileges of the peers in England and the liberty of the commons were originally the growth of that foreign country.

In ancient times, men were little solicitous to obtain a place in the legislative assemblies ; and rather regarded their attendance as a burden, which was not compensated by any return of profit or honour proportionate to the trouble and expence. The only reason for instituting those public councils was, on the part of the subject, that they desired some security from the attempts of arbitrary power ; and on the part of the sovereign, that he despaired of governing men of such independent spirits without their own consent and concurrence. But the commons, or the inhabitants of boroughs, had not as yet reached such a degree of consideration as to desire *security* against

their prince, or to imagine, that even if they were assembled in a representative body, they had power or rank sufficient to enforce it. The only protection which they aspired to, was against the immediate violence and injustice of their fellow-citizens; and this advantage each of them looked for from the courts of justice, or from the authority of some great lord, to whom, by law or his own choice, he was attached. On the other hand, the sovereign was sufficiently assured of obedience in the whole community, if he procured the concurrence of the nobles; nor had he reason to apprehend that any order of the state could resist his and their united authority. The military subvassals could entertain no idea of opposing both their prince and their superiors: the burgesses and tradesmen could much less aspire to such a thought: and thus, even if history were silent on the head, we have reason to conclude, from the known situation of society during those ages, that the commons were never admitted as members of the legislative body.

The *executive* power of the Anglo-Norman government was lodged in the king. Besides the stated meetings of the national council at the three great festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide^u, he was accustomed, on any sudden exigence, to summon them together. He could at his pleasure command the attendance of

^u Dugd. Orig. Jurid. p. 15. Spelm. Gloss. in verbo *Parliamentum*.

his barons and their vassals, in which consisted the military force of the kingdom; and could employ them, during forty days, either in resisting a foreign enemy, or reducing his rebellious subjects. And, what was of great importance, the whole *judicial* power was ultimately in his hands, and was exercised by officers and ministers of his appointment.

JUDICIAL POWER.

THE general plan of the Anglo-Norman government was, that the court of barony was appointed to decide such controversies as arose between the several vassals or subjects of the same barony; the hundred-court and county-court, which were still continued as during the Saxon times^w, to judge between the subjects of different baronies^x; and the *curia regis*, or king's court, to give sentence

^w Ang. Sacra. vol. i. p. 334, &c. Dugd. Orig. Jurid. p. 27, 29. Madox. Hist. of Exch. p. 75, 76. Spelm. Gloss. in verbo *Hundred*.

^x None of the feudal governments in Europe had such institutions as the county courts, which the great authority of the Conqueror still retained from the Saxon customs. All the freeholders of the county, even the greatest barons, were obliged to attend the sheriffs in these courts, and to assist them in the administration of justice. By these means they received frequent and sensible admonitions of their dependance on the king or supreme magistrate: they formed a kind of community with their fellow barons and freeholders: they were often drawn from their individual and independent state, peculiar to the feudal system; and

among the barons themselves^y. But this plan, though simple, was attended with some circumstances which, being derived from a very extensive authority assumed by the Conqueror, contributed to increase the royal prerogative; and as long as the state was not disturbed by arms, reduced every order of the community to some degree of dependance and subordination.

The king himself often sat in his court, which always attended his person^z: he there heard causes and pronounced judgement^a; and though he was assisted by the advice of the other members, it is not to be imagined that a decision could easily be obtained contrary to his inclination or opinion. In his absence the chief justiciary presided, who was the first magistrate in the state, and a kind of viceroy, on whom depended all the civil affairs of the kingdom^b. The other chief officers of the crown, the constable, mareschal, seneschal, chamberlain, treasurer, and chancellor^c,

were made members of a political body: and, perhaps, this institution of county courts in England has had greater effects on the government than has yet been distinctly pointed out by historians, or traced by antiquaries. The barons were never able to free themselves from this attendance on the sheriffs and itinerant justices till the reign of Henry III. ^y Brady, Pref. p. 143.

^z Madox Hist. of Exch. p. 103.

^a Bracton, lib. iii. cap. 9. § 1. cap. 10. § 1.

^b Spelm. Gloss. in verbo *Justiciarii*.

^c Madox Hist. Exch. p. 27, 29, 33, 38, 41, 54. The Normans introduced the practice of sealing charters: and the chancellor's office was to keep the Great Seal. *Ingulph. Dugd.* p. 33, 34.

were members, together with such feudal barons as thought proper to attend, and the barons of the Exchequer, who at first were also feudal barons appointed by the king^d. This court, which was sometimes called the king's court, sometimes the court of Exchequer, judged in all causes, civil and criminal, and comprehended the whole business which is now shared out among four courts, the Chancery, the King's Bench, the Common Pleas, and the Exchequer^e.

Such an accumulation of powers was itself a great source of authority, and rendered the jurisdiction of the court formidable to all the subjects; but the turn which judicial trials took soon after the Conquest, served still more to increase its authority, and to augment the royal prerogatives. William, among the other violent changes which he attempted and effected, had introduced the Norman law into England^f, had ordered all the pleadings to be in that tongue, and had interwoven with the English jurisprudence, all the maxims and principles which the Normans, more advanced in cultivation, and naturally litigious, were accustomed to observe in the distribution of justice. Law now became a science, which at first fell entirely into the hands of the Normans; and which, even after it was communicated to the English, required so much study and application,

^d Madox Hist. of the Exch. p. 134, 135. Gerv. Durob. p. 1367.

^e Madox Hist. of the Exch. p. 56, 70.

^f Dial de Seac. p. 30. apud Madox Hist. of the Exchequer.

that the laity, in those ignorant ages, were incapable of attaining it, and it was a mystery almost solely confined to the clergy, and chiefly to the monks^g. The great officers of the crown, and the feudal barons, who were military men, found themselves unfit to penetrate into those obscurities; and though they were entitled to a seat in the supreme judicature, the business of the court was wholly managed by the chief justiciary and the law barons, who were men appointed by the king, and entirely at his disposal^h. This natural course of things was forwarded by the multiplicity of business which flowed into that court, and which daily augmented by the appeals from all the subordinate judicatures of the kingdom.

In the Saxon times, no appeal was received in the king's court, except upon the denial or delay of justice by the inferior courts; and the same practice was still observed in most of the feudal kingdoms of Europe. But the great power of the Conqueror established at first in England an authority which the monarchs in France were not able to attain till the reign of St. Lewis, who lived near two centuries after: he empowered his court to receive appeals both from the courts of barony and the county-courts, and by that means brought the administration of justice ultimately into the hands of the sovereignⁱ. And lest the expence

^g Malmes. lib. 4. p. 123.

^h Dugd. Orig. Jurid. p. 25.

ⁱ Madox Hist. of the Exch. p. 65. Glanv. lib. 12. cap. 1, 7. LL. Hen. I. § 31. apud Wilkins, p. 248. Fitz-Stephens, p. 86. Coke's Comment on the statute of Marlbridge, cap. 20.

or trouble of a journey to court should discourage suitors, and make them acquiesce in the decision of the inferior judicatures, itinerant judges were afterwards established, who made their circuits throughout the kingdom, and tried all causes that were brought before them^k. By this expedient the courts of barony were kept in awe; and if they still preserved some influence, it was only from the apprehensions which the vassals might entertain of disobliging their superior, by appealing from his jurisdiction. But the county-courts were much discredited; and as the freeholders were found ignorant of the intricate principles and forms of the new law, the lawyers gradually brought all business before the king's judges, and abandoned the ancient simple and popular judicature. After this manner the formalities of justice, which, though they appear tedious and cumbersome, are found requisite to the support of liberty in all monarchical governments, proved at first, by a combination of causes, very advantageous to royal authority in England.

^k Madox Hist. of the Exch. p. 83, 84, 100. Gerv. Dorob. p. 1410. What made the Anglo-Norman barons more readily submit to appeals from their court to the king's court of Exchequer, was their being accustomed to like appeals in Normandy to the ducal court of Exchequer. See Gilbert's History of the Exchequer, p. 1, 2; though the author thinks it doubtful whether the Norman court was not rather copied from the English, p. 6.

REVENUE OF THE CROWN.

THE power of the Norman kings was also much supported by a great revenue; and by a revenue that was fixed, perpetual, and independent of the subject. The people, without betaking themselves to arms, had no check upon the king, and no regular security for the due administration of justice. In those days of violence, many instances of oppression passed unheeded; and soon after were openly pleaded as precedents, which it was unlawful to dispute or control. Princes and ministers were too ignorant to be themselves sensible of the advantages attending an equitable administration; and there was no established council or assembly which could protect the people, and, by withdrawing supplies, regularly and peaceably admonish the king of his duty, and ensure the execution of the laws.

The first branch of the king's stated revenue was the royal demesnes or crown lands, which were very extensive, and comprehended, beside a great number of manors, most of the chief cities of the kingdom. It was established by law, that the king could alienate no part of his demesne, and that he himself or his successor could at any time resume such donations¹: but this law was

¹Fleta, lib. 1. cap. 8. § 17. lib. 3. cap. 6. § 3. Bracton, lib. 2. cap. 5.

never regularly observed; which happily rendered in time the crown somewhat more dependant. The rent of the crown lands, considered merely as so much riches, was a source of power: the influence of the king over his tenants and the inhabitants of his towns, increased this power: but the other numerous branches of his revenue, besides supplying his treasury, gave, by their very nature, a great latitude to arbitrary authority, and were a support of the prerogative; as will appear from an enumeration of them.

The king was never content with the stated rents, but levied heavy talliages at pleasure on the inhabitants both of town and country, who lived within his demesne. All bargains of sale, in order to prevent theft, being prohibited, except in boroughs and public markets^m, he pretended to exact tolls on all goods which were there soldⁿ. He seized two hogsheads, one before and one behind the mast, from every vessel that imported wine. All goods paid to his customs a proportionable part of their value^o: passage over bridges and on rivers was loaded with tolls at pleasure^p: and though the boroughs by degrees bought the liberty of farming these impositions, yet the revenue profited by these bargains; new sums were often exacted for the renewal and confirmation of

^m LL. Will. I. cap. 61.

ⁿ Madox, p. 530.

^o Ibid. p. 529. This author says a fifteenth. But it is not easy to reconcile this account to other authorities.

^p Madox, p. 529.

their charters^q, and the people were thus held in perpetual dependance.

Such was the situation of the inhabitants within the royal demesnes. But the possessors of land, or the military tenants, though they were better protected both by law, and by the great privilege of carrying arms, were, from the nature of their tenures, much exposed to the inroads of power, and possessed not what we should esteem, in our age, a very durable security. The Conqueror ordained that the barons should be obliged to pay nothing beyond their stated services^r, except a reasonable aid to ransom his person if he were taken in war, to make his eldest son a knight, and to marry his eldest daughter. What should on these occasions be deemed a reasonable aid, was not determined; and the demands of the crown were so far discretionary.

The king could require in war the personal attendance of his vassals, that is, of almost all the landed proprietors; and if they declined the service, they were obliged to pay him a composition in money, which was called a scutage. The sum was, during some reigns, precarious and uncertain; it was sometimes levied without allowing the vassal the liberty of personal service^s; and it was a usual artifice of the king's to pretend an expedition, that he might be entitled to levy the scutage from his military tenants. Danegelt was

^q Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 275, 276, 277, &c.

^r LL. Will. Conq. § 55.

^s Gervase de Tilbury, p. 25.

another species of land-tax levied by the early Norman kings, arbitrarily, and contrary to the laws of the conqueror[†]. Moneyage was also a general land-tax of the same nature, levied by the two first Norman kings, and abolished by the charter of Henry I^u. It was a shilling paid every three years by each hearth, to induce the king not to use his prerogative in debasing the coin. Indeed it appears from that charter, that though the Conqueror had granted his military tenants an immunity from all taxes and talliages, he and his son William had never thought themselves bound to observe that rule, but had levied impositions at pleasure on all the landed estates of the kingdom. The utmost that Henry grants is, that the land cultivated by the military tenant himself shall not be so burdened; but he reserves the power of taxing the farmers: and as it is known that Henry's charter was never observed in any one article, we may be assured that this prince and his successors retracted even this small indulgence, and levied arbitrary impositions on all the lands of all their subjects. These taxes were sometimes very heavy; since Malmesbury tells us, that in the reign of William Rufus, the farmers, on account of them, abandoned tillage, and a famine ensued^w.

The escheats were a great branch both of power

[†] Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 475. ^u Matth. Paris, p. 38.

^w So also Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 55. Knyghton, p. 2366.

and of revenue, especially during the first reigns after the Conquest. In default of posterity from the first baron, his land reverted to the crown, and continually augmented the king's possessions. The prince had indeed by law a power of alienating these escheats; but by this means he had an opportunity of establishing the fortunes of his friends and servants, and thereby enlarging his authority. Sometimes he retained them in his own hands; and they were gradually confounded with the royal demesnes, and became difficult to be distinguished from them. This confusion is probably the reason why the king acquired the right of alienating his demesnes.

But besides escheats from default of heirs, those which ensued from crimes, or breach of duty towards the superior lord, were frequent in ancient times. If the vassal, being thrice summoned to attend his superior's court, and do fealty, neglected or refused obedience, he forfeited all title to his land^x. If he denied his tenure, or refused his service, he was exposed to the same penalty^y. If he sold his estate without licence from his lord^z, or if he sold it upon any other tenure or title than that by which he himself held it^a, he lost all right to it. The adhering to his lord's enemies^b, deserting him in war^c, betraying his se-

^x Hottom. de Feud. Disp. cap. 38. col. 886.

^y Lib. Feud. lib. 3. tit. 1. 4. tit. lib. 21. 39.

^z Id. lib. 1. tit. 21.

^a Id. lib. 4. tit. 44.

^b Id. lib. 3. tit. 1.

^c Id. lib. 4. tit. 14. 21.

crets^d, debauching his wife or his near relations^e, or even using indecent freedoms with them^f, might be punished by forfeiture. The higher crimes, rapes, robbery, murder, arson, &c. were called felony; and being interpreted want of fidelity to his lord, made him lose his fief^g. Even where the felon was vassal to a baron, though his immediate lord enjoyed the forfeiture, the king might retain possession of his estate during a twelvemonth, and had the right of spoiling and detroying it, unless the baron paid him a reasonable composition^h. We have not here enumerated all the species of felonies, or of crimes by which forfeiture was incurred: we have said enough to prove, that the possession of feudal property was anciently somewhat precarious, and that the primary idea was never lost, of its being a kind of *fee* or *benefice*.

When a baron died, the king immediately took possession of the estate; and the heir, before he recovered his right, was obliged to make application to the crown, and desire that he might be admitted to do homage for his land, and pay a composition to the king. This composition was not at first fixed by law, at least by practice: the king was often exorbitant in his demands, and kept possession of the land till they were complied with.

^d Lib. Feud. lib. 4. tit. 14.

^e Id. lib. i. tit. 14. 21.

^f Id. lib. 1. tit. 1.

^g Spelm. Gloss. in verb. *Felonia*.

^h Idem. Glanville, lib. 7. cap. 17.

If the heir were a minor, the king retained the whole profit of the estate till his majority; and might grant what sum he thought proper for the education and maintenance of the young baron. This practice was also founded on the notion that a fief was a benefice, and that while the heir could not perform his military services, the revenue devolved to the superior, who employed another in his stead. It is obvious, that a great proportion of the landed property must, by means of this device, be continually in the hands of the prince, and that all the noble families were thereby held in perpetual dependance. When the king granted the wardship of a rich heir to any one, he had the opportunity of enriching a favourite or minister: if he sold it, he thereby levied a considerable sum of money. Simon de Mountfort paid Henry III. 10,000 marks, an immense sum in those days, for the wardship of Gilbert de Umfrevilleⁱ. Geoffrey de Mandeville paid to the same prince the sum of 20,000 marks, that he might marry Isabel countess of Gloucester, and possess all her lands and knights fees. This sum would be equivalent to 300,000, perhaps 400,000 pounds in our time^k.

If the heir were a female, the king was entitled to offer her any husband of her rank he thought proper; and if she refused him, she forfeited her land. Even a male heir could not marry without the royal consent; and it was usual for men to

ⁱ Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 223.

^k Id. p. 322.

pay large sums for the liberty of making their own choice in marriage¹. No man could dispose of his land, either by sale or will, without the consent of his superior. The possessor was never considered as full proprietor: he was still a kind of beneficiary; and could not oblige his superior to accept of any vassal that was not agreeable to him.

Fines, amerciaments, and oblatas, as they were called, were another considerable branch of the royal power and revenue. The ancient records of the exchequer, which are still preserved, give surprising accounts of the numerous fines and amerciaments levied in those days^m, and of the strange inventions fallen upon to exact money from the subject. It appears that the ancient kings of England put themselves entirely on the foot of the barbarous eastern princes, whom no man must approach without a present, who sell all their good offices, and who intrude themselves into every business that they may have a pretence for extorting money. Even justice was avowedly bought and sold; the king's court itself, though the supreme judicature of the kingdom, was open to none that brought not presents to the king; the bribes given for the expedition, delayⁿ, suspension, and, doubtless, for the perversion of justice, were entered in the public registers of the royal revenue, and remain as monuments of the

¹ Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 320.

^m Id. p. 272.

ⁿ Id. p. 274. 309.

perpetual iniquity and tyranny of the times. The barons of the exchequer, for instance, the first nobility of the kingdom, were not ashamed to insert, as an article in their records, that the county of Norfolk paid a sum that they might be fairly dealt with^o; the borough of Yarmouth, that the king's charters, which they have for their liberties, might not be violated^p; Richard, son of Gilbert, for the king's helping him to recover his debt from the Jews^q; Serlo, son of Terlavaston, that he might be permitted to make his defence, in case he were accused of a certain homicide^r; Walter de Burton, for free law, if accused of wounding another^s; Robert de Essart, for having an inquest to find whether Roger the Butcher, and Wace and Humphrey, accused him of robbery and theft out of envy and ill-will or not^t; William Buhurst, for having an inquest to find whether he were accused of the death of one Godwin, out of ill-will, or for just cause^u. I have selected these few instances from a great number of a like kind, which Madox had selected from a still greater number, preserved in the ancient rolls of the exchequer^w.

Sometimes the party litigant offered the king a certain portion, a half, a third, a fourth, payable out of the debts which he, as the executor of

^o Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 295.

^p Id. Ibid.

^q Id. p. 296. He paid 200 marks, a great sum in those days.

^r Id. p. 296. ^s Id. ibid. ^t Id. p. 298. ^u Id. p. 302.

^w Id. chap.-12.

justice, should assist him in recovering^x. Theophania de Westland agreed to pay the half of 212 marks, that she might recover that sum against James de Fughleston^y; Solomon the Jew engaged to pay one mark out of every seven that he should recover against Hugh de la Hose^z; Nicholas Morrel promised to pay sixty pounds, that the earl of Flanders might be distrained to pay him 343 pounds, which the earl had taken from him; and these sixty pounds were to be paid out of the first money that Nicholas should recover from the earl^a.

As the king assumed the entire power over trade, he was to be paid for a permission to exercise commerce or industry of any kind^b. Hugh Oisel paid 400 marks for liberty to trade in England^c: Nigel de Havene gave fifty marks for the partnership in merchandise which he had with Gervase de Hanton^d: the men of Worcester paid 100 shillings, that they might have the liberty of selling and buying dyed cloth as formerly^e: several other towns paid for a like liberty^f. The commerce indeed of the kingdom was so much under the controul of the king, that he erected guilds, corporations, and monopolies wherever he pleased; and levied sums for these exclusive privileges^g.

^x Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 311. ^y Id. ibid.

^z Id. p. 79, 312. ^a Id. p. 312. ^b Id. p. 323. ^c Id. ibid.

^d Id. ibid. ^e Id. p. 324. ^f Id. ibid. ^g Id. p. 232, 233, &c.

There were no profits so small as to be below the king's attention. Henry, son of Arthur, gave ten dogs to have a recognition against the countess of Copland for one knight's fee^h. Roger, son of Nicholas, gave twenty lampreys and twenty shads for an inquest, to find whether Gilbert, son of Alured, gave to Roger 200 muttons to obtain his confirmation for certain lands, or whether Roger took them from him by violenceⁱ: Geoffrey Fitz-Pierre, the chief justiciary, gave two good Norway hawks, that Walter de Madine might have leave to export a hundred weight of cheese out of the king's dominions^k.

It is really amusing to remark the strange business in which the king sometimes interfered, and never without a present: the wife of Hugh de Neville gave the king 200 hens, that she might lie with her husband one night^l; and she brought with her two sureties, who answered each for a hundred hens. It is probable that her husband was a prisoner, which debarred her from having access to him. The abbot of Rucford paid ten marks for leave to erect houses and place men upon his land near Welhang, in order to secure his wood there from being stolen^m: Hugh archdeacon of Wells gave one tun of wine for leave to carry 600 sums of corn whither he wouldⁿ: Peter

^h Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 298.

ⁱ Id. p. 305.

^k Id. p. 325.

^l Id. p. 326.

^m Id. *ibid.*

ⁿ Id. p. 320.

de Peraris gave twenty marks for leave to salt fishes, as Peter Chevalier used to do°.

It was usual to pay high fines, in order to gain the king's good-will, or mitigate his anger. In the reign of Henry II. Gilbert, the son of Fergus, fines in 919 pounds 9 shillings to obtain that prince's favour; William de Chataignes a thousand marks, that he would remit his displeasure. In the reign of Henry III. the city of London fines in no less a sum than 20,000 pounds on the same account^p.

The king's protection and good offices of every kind were bought and sold. Robert Grislet paid twenty marks of silver, that the king would help him against the earl of Mortaigne in a certain plea^q: Robert de Cundet gave thirty marks of silver that the king would bring him to an accord with the bishop of Lincoln^r: Ralph de Breckham gave a hawk, that the king would protect him^s; and this is a very frequent reason for payments: John, son of Ordgar, gave a Norway hawk to have the king's request to the king of Norway to let him have his brother Godard's chattels^t: Richard de Neville gave twenty palfreys to obtain the king's request to Isolda Bisset, that she should take him for a husband^u: Roger Fitz-Walter gave three good palfreys to have the king's letter to Roger Bertram's mother, that she should marry

° Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 326.

^p Id. p. 329.

^q Id. ibid.

^r Id. p. 330.

^s Id. p. 332.

^t Id. ibid.

^u Id. p. 333.

him^w: Eling, the dean, paid 100 marks, that his whore and his children might be let out upon bail^x: the bishop of Winchester gave one tun of good wine for his not putting the king in mind to give a girdle to the countess of Albemarle^y: Robert de Veaux gave five of the best palfreys, that the king would hold his tongue about Henry Pinel's wife^z. There are, in the records of the exchequer, many other singular instances of a like nature^a. It will however be just to remark, that

^w Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 333.

^x Id. p. 342. *Pro habenda amica sua et filiis, &c.* ^y Id. p. 352.

^z Id. ibid. *Ut rex taceret de uxore Henrici Pinel.*

^a We shall gratify the reader's curiosity by subjoining a few more instances from Madox, p. 332. Hugh Oisel was to give the king two robes of a good green colour, to have the king's letters patent to the merchants of Flanders, with a request to render him 1000 marks, which he lost in Flanders. The abbot of Hyde paid thirty marks, to have the king's letters of request to the archbishop of Canterbury, to remove certain monks that were against the abbot. Roger de Trihanton paid twenty marks and a palfrey, to have the king's request to Richard de Umfreville to give him his sister to wife, and to the sister that she would accept of him for a husband. William de Cheveringworth paid five marks, to have the king's letter to the abbot of Persore, to let him enjoy peaceably his tythes as formerly. Matthew de Hereford, clerk, paid ten marks for a letter of request to the bishop of Landaff, to let him enjoy peaceably his church of Schenfrith. Andrew Neulun gave three Flemish caps for the king's request to the prior of Chikesand, for performance of an agreement made between them. Henry de Fontibus gave a Lombardy horse of value to have the king's request to Henry Fitz-Harvey, that he would give him his daughter to wife. Roger, son of Nicholas, promised all the lampreys he could get, to have the king's request to earl William Marshal, that he would grant him the ma-

the same ridiculous practices and dangerous abuses prevailed in Normandy, and probably in all the other states of Europe^b: England was not, in this respect, more barbarous than its neighbours.

These iniquitous practices of the Norman kings were so well known, that on the death of Hugh Bigod, in the reign of Henry II. the best and most just of these princes, the eldest son and the widow of this nobleman came to court, and strove, by offering large presents to the king, each of them to acquire possession of that rich inheritance. The king was so equitable as to order the cause to be tried by the great council! But in the mean time he seized all the money and treasure of the deceased^c. Peter of Blois, a judicious and even an elegant writer for that age, gives a pathetic description of the venality of justice, and the oppressions of the poor under the reign of Henry: and he scruples not to complain to the king himself of these abuses^d. We may judge what the case would be under the government of worse

nor of Langeford at Firm. The burgesses of Gloucester promised 300 lampreys, that they might not be distrained to find the prisoners of Poictou with necessaries, unless they pleased. *Id.* p. 352. Jordan, son of Reginald, paid twenty marks to have the king's request to William Paniel, that he would grant him the land of Mill Nierenuit, and the custody of his heirs; and if Jordan obtained the same, he was to pay the twenty marks, otherwise not. *Id.* p. 333.

^b Madox's *Hist. of the Exch.* p. 359.

^c *Bened. Abb.* p. 180, 181.

^d *Petri Bles. Epist.* 95. *apud Bibl. Patrum*, tom. 24. p. 2014.

princes. The articles of enquiry concerning the conduct of sheriffs, which Henry promulgated in 1170, show the great power, as well as the licentiousness of these officers ^e.

Amerciaments or fines for crimes and trespasses were another considerable branch of the royal revenue ^f. Most crimes were atoned for by money; the fines imposed were not limited by any rule or statute; and frequently occasioned the total ruin of the person, even for the slightest trespasses. The forest-laws, particularly, were a great source of oppression. The king possessed sixty-eight forests, thirteen chases, and seven hundred and eighty-one parks, in different parts of England^g; and, considering the extreme passion of the English and Normans for hunting, these were so many snares laid for the people, by which they were allured into trespasses, and brought within the reach of arbitrary and rigorous laws, which the king had thought proper to enact by his own authority.

But the most barefaced acts of tyranny and oppression were practised against the Jews, who were entirely out of the protection of law, were extremely odious from the bigotry of the people, and were abandoned to the immeasurable rapacity of the king and his ministers. Besides many other indignities to which they were continually exposed, it appears that they were once all thrown

^e Hoveden, Chron. Gerv. p. 1410.

^f Madox, chap. xiv.

^g Spelm. Gloss. in verbo *Foresta*.

into prison, and the sum of 66,000 marks exacted for their liberty^h: at another time, Isaac the Jew paid alone 5100 marksⁱ; Brun, 3000 marks^k; Jurnet, 2000; Bennet, 500: at another, Lico-rica, widow of David the Jew of Oxford, was required to pay 6000 marks; and she was delivered over to six of the richest and discreetest Jews in England, who were to answer for the sum^l. Henry III. borrowed 5000 marks from the earl of Cornwall; and for his repayment consigned over to him all the Jews in England^m. The revenue arising from exactions upon this nation was so considerable, that there was a particular court of exchequer set apart for managing itⁿ.

COMMERCE.

WE may judge concerning the low state of commerce among the English, when the Jews, notwithstanding these oppressions, could still find their account in trading among them, and lending them money. And as the improvements of agriculture were also much checked by the immense possessions of the nobility, by the disorders of the times, and by the precarious state of

^h Madox's Hist. of the Exch. p. 151. This happened in the reign of king John.

ⁱ Id. p. 151.

^k Id. p. 153.

^l Id. p. 168.

^m Id. p. 156.

ⁿ Id. ch. vii.

feudal property, it appears that industry of no kind could then have place in the kingdom°.

It is asserted by Sir Harry Spelman^P, as an undoubted truth, that, during the reigns of the first Norman princes, every edict of the king, issued with the consent of his privy council, had the full force of law. But the barons, surely, were not so passive as to entrust a power, entirely arbitrary and despotic, into the hands of the sovereign. It only appears, that the constitution had not fixed any precise boundaries to the royal power; that the right of issuing proclamations on any emergency, and of exacting obedience to them, a right which was always supposed inherent in the crown, is very difficult to be distinguished from a legislative authority; that the extreme imperfection of the ancient laws, and the sudden exigencies which often occurred in such turbulent governments, obliged the prince to exert frequently the latent powers of his prerogative; that he naturally proceeded, from the acquiescence of the people, to assume, in many particulars of moment, an au-

° We learn from the extracts given us of Domesday by Brady, in his Treatise of Boroughs, that almost all the boroughs of England had suffered in the shock of the Conquest, and had extremely decayed between the death of the Confessor, and the time when Domesday was framed.

^P Gloss. in verb. *Judicium Dei*. The author of the *Mirror des Justices* complains, that ordinances are only made by the king and his clerks, and by aliens and others, who dare not contradict the king, but study to please him. Whence, he concludes, laws are oftener dictated by will, than founded on right.

thority from which he had excluded himself by express statutes, charters, or concessions, and which was, in the main, repugnant to the general genius of the constitution; and that the lives, the personal liberty, and the properties of all his subjects, were less secured by law against the exertion of his arbitrary authority, than by the independent power and private connections of each individual. It appears from the Great Charter itself, that not only John, a tyrannical prince, and Richard, a violent one, but their father Henry, under whose reign the prevalence of gross abuses is the least to be suspected, were accustomed, from their sole authority, without process of law, to imprison, banish, and attain the freemen of their kingdom.

A great baron, in ancient times, considered himself as a kind of sovereign within his territory; and was attended by courtiers and dependants more zealously attached to him than the ministers of state and the great officers were commonly to *their* sovereign. He often maintained in his court the parade of royalty, by establishing a justiciary, constable, mareschal, chamberlain, seneschal, and chancellor, and assigning to each of these officers a separate province and command. He was usually very assiduous in exercising his jurisdiction; and took such delight in that image of sovereignty, that it was found necessary to restrain his activity, and prohibit him by law from holding courts too

frequently^a. It is not to be doubted, but the example set him by the prince, of a mercenary and sordid extortion, would be faithfully copied; and that all his good and bad offices, his justice and injustice, were equally put to sale. He had the power, with the king's consent, to exact talliages even from the free citizens who lived within his barony; and as his necessities made him rapacious, his authority was usually found to be more oppressive and tyrannical than that of the sovereign^r: he was ever engaged in hereditary or personal animosities or confederacies with his neighbours, and often gave protection to all desperate adventurers and criminals who could be useful in serving his violent purposes. He was able alone, in times of tranquillity, to obstruct the execution of justice within his territories; and by combining with a few mal-content barons of high rank and power, he could throw the state into convulsions. And, on the whole, though the royal authority was confined within bounds, and often within very narrow ones, yet the check was irregular, and frequently the source of great disorders; nor was it derived from the liberty of the people, but from the military power of many petty tyrants, who were equally dangerous to the prince, and oppressive to the subject.

^a Dugd. Jurid. Orig. p. 26.

^r Madox, Hist. of Exch. p. 520.

THE CHURCH.

THE power of the church was another rampart against royal authority ; but this defence was also the cause of many mischiefs and inconveniences. The dignified clergy, perhaps, were not so prone to immediate violence as the barons ; but as they pretended to a total independence on the state, and could always cover themselves with the appearances of religion, they proved, in one respect, an obstruction to the settlement of the kingdom, and to the regular execution of the laws. The policy of the conqueror was in this particular liable to some exception. He augmented the superstitious veneration for Rome, to which that age was so much inclined ; and he broke those bands of connection, which, in the Saxon times, had preserved an union between the lay and the clerical orders. He prohibited the bishops from sitting in the county courts ; he allowed ecclesiastical causes to be tried in spiritual courts only^a ; and he so much exalted the power of the clergy, that of 60,215 knights fees, into which he divided England, he placed no less than 28,015 under the church^b.

^a Charl. Will. apud Wilkins, p. 230. Spel. Conc. vol. ii. p. 14.

^b Spel. Gloss. in verb. *Manus Mortua*. We are not to imagine, as some have done, that the church possessed lands in this proportion, but only that they and their vassals enjoyed such a proportionable part of the landed property.

CIVIL LAWS.

THE right of primogeniture was introduced with the feudal law : an institution which is hurtful, by producing and maintaining an unequal division of private property ; but is advantageous in another respect, by accustoming the people to a preference in favour of the eldest son, and thereby preventing a partition or disputed succession in the monarchy. The Normans introduced the use of surnames, which tend to preserve the knowledge of families and pedigrees. They abolished none of the old absurd methods of trial by the cross or ordeal ; and they added a new absurdity, the trial by single combat^u, which became a regular part of jurisprudence, and was conducted with all the order, method, devotion, and solemnity imaginable^w. The ideas of chivalry also seem to have been imported by the Normans : no traces of those fantastic notions are to be found among the plain and rustic Saxons.

MANNERS.

THE feudal institutions, by raising the military tenants to a kind of sovereign dignity, by render-

^u LL. Will. cap. 68.

^w Spel. Gloss. in verb. *Campus*. The last instance of these duels was in the 15th of Eliz. So long did that absurdity remain.

ing personal strength and valour requisite, and by making every knight and baron his own protector and avenger, begat that martial pride and sense of honour, which, being cultivated and embellished by the poets and romance-writers of the age, ended in chivalry. The virtuous knight fought not only in his own quarrel, but in that of the innocent, of the helpless, and, above all, of the fair, whom he supposed to be for ever under the guardianship of his valiant arm. The uncourteous knight who, from his castle, exercised robbery on travellers, and committed violence on virgins, was the object of his perpetual indignation; and he put him to death, without scruple, or trial, or appeal, wherever he met with him. The great independence of men made personal honour and fidelity the chief tie among them; and rendered it the capital virtue of every true knight, or genuine professor of chivalry. The solemnities of single combat, as established by law, banished the notion of every thing unfair or unequal in rencounters; and maintained an appearance of courtesy between the combatants, till the moment of their engagement. The credulity of the age grafted on this stock the notion of giants, enchanters, dragons, spells*, and a thousand wonders, which still multiplied during the

* In all legal single combats, it was part of the champion's oath, that he carried not about him any herb, spell, or enchantment, by which he might procure victory. Dugd. Orig. Jurid. p. 82.

times of the Crusades; when men, returning from so great a distance, used the liberty of imposing every fiction on their believing audience. These ideas of chivalry infected the writings, conversation, and behaviour of men, during some ages; and even after they were, in a great measure, banished by the revival of learning, they left modern *gallantry* and the *point of honour*, which still maintain their influence, and are the genuine offspring of those ancient affectations.

The concession of the Great Charter, or rather its full establishment (for there was a considerable interval of time between the one and the other), gave rise, by degrees, to a new species of government, and introduced some order and justice into the administration. The ensuing scenes of our history are therefore somewhat different from the preceding. Yet the Great Charter contained no establishment of new courts, magistrates, or senates, nor abolition of the old. It introduced no new distribution of the powers of the commonwealth, and no innovation in the political or public law of the kingdom. It only guarded, and that merely by verbal clauses, against such tyrannical practices as are incompatible with civilized government, and, if they become very frequent, are incompatible with all government. The barbarous licence of the kings, and perhaps of the nobles, was thenceforth somewhat more restrained: men acquired some more security for their properties and their liberties:

and government approached a little nearer to that end for which it was originally instituted, the distribution of justice, and the equal protection of the citizens. Acts of violence and iniquity in the crown, which before were only deemed injurious to individuals, and were hazardous chiefly in proportion to the number, power, and dignity of the persons affected by them, were now regarded, in some degree, as public injuries, and as infringements of a charter calculated for general security. And thus the establishment of the Great Charter, without seeming anywise to innovate in the distribution of political power, became a kind of epoch in the constitution.



J. M. Delattre sculp.

Henry the Third.



CHAP. XII. p. 376.

The ecclesiastical order sent a deputation, consisting of four prelates, the primate, and the bishops of Winchester, Salisbury, and Carlisle, in order to remonstrate with him on his frequent violations of their privileges, the oppressions with which he had loaded them and all his subjects, and the uncanonical and forced elections which were made to vacant dignities. "It is true," replied the king, "I have been somewhat faulty in this particular: I obtruded you, my lord of Canterbury, upon your see: I was obliged to employ both entreaties and menaces, my lord of Winchester, to have you elected: my proceedings, I confess, were very irregular, my lords of Salisbury and Carlisle, when I raised you from the lowest stations to your present dignities: I am determined henceforth to correct these abuses; and it will also become you, in order to make a thorough reformation, to resign your present benefices; and try to enter again in a more regular and canonical manner."

CHAPTER XII.

HENRY III.

Settlement of the Government General Pacification
 Death of the Protector Some Commotions Hubert de
 Burgh displaced The Bishop of Winchester Minister
 King's Partiality to Foreigners Grievances Ecclesiastical
 Grievances Earl of Cornwall elected King of the Romans
 Discontent of the Barons Simon de Mountfort earl of
 Leicester Provisions for Oxford Usurpation of the
 Barons Prince Edward Civil Wars of the Barons
 Reference to the King of France Renewal of the Civil Wars
 Battle of Lewes House of Commons Battle of
 Evesham and Death of Leicester Settlement of the Govern-
 ment Death and Character of the King Miscel-
 laneous Transactions of this Reign.

Most sciences, in proportion as they increase and improve, invent methods by which they facilitate their reasonings; and, employing general theorems, are enabled to comprehend, in a few propositions, a great number of inferences and conclusions. History also, being a collection of facts which are multiplying without end, is obliged to adopt such arts of abridgment, to retain the more material events, and to drop all the minute circumstances, which are only interesting during the time, or to the persons engaged in the

transactions. This truth is no where more evident than with regard to the reign upon which we are going to enter. What mortal could have the patience to write or read a long detail of such frivolous events as those with which it is filled, or attend to a tedious narrative which would follow, through a series of fifty-six years, the caprices and weaknesses of so mean a prince as Henry? The chief reason why protestant writers have been so anxious to spread out the incidents of this reign is, in order to expose the rapacity, ambition, and artifices of the court of Rome; and to prove that the great dignitaries of the catholic church, while they pretended to have nothing in view but the salvation of souls, had bent all their attention to the acquisition of riches, and were restrained by no sense of justice or of honour in the pursuit of that great object^y. But this conclusion would readily be allowed them, though it were not illustrated by such a detail of uninteresting incidents; and follows, indeed, by an evident necessity, from the very situation in which that church was placed with regard to the rest of Europe. For, besides that ecclesiastical power, as it can always cover its operations under a cloak of sanctity, and attacks men on the side where they dare not employ their reason, lies less under controul than civil government; besides this general cause, I say, the pope and his courtiers

^y M. Paris, p. 623.

were foreigners to most of the churches which they governed; they could not possibly have any other object than to pillage the provinces for present gain; and as they lived at a distance, they would be little awed by shame or remorse, in employing every lucrative expedient which was suggested to them. England being one of the most remote provinces attached to the Romish hierarchy, as well as the most prone to superstition, felt severely, during this reign, while its patience was not yet fully exhausted, the influence of these causes; and we shall often have occasion to touch cursorily upon such incidents. But we shall not attempt to comprehend every transaction transmitted to us; and till the end of the reign, when the events become more memorable, we shall not always observe an exact chronological order in our narration.

SETTLEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT. 1216.

THE earl of Pembroke, who, at the time of John's death, was mareschal of England, was by his office at the head of the armies, and consequently, during a state of civil wars and convulsions, at the head of the government; and it happened fortunately for the young monarch and for the nation, that the power could not have been intrusted into more able and more faithful hands. This nobleman, who had maintained his loyalty unshaken to John during the lowest fortune of

that monarch, determined to support the authority of the infant prince; nor was he dismayed at the number and violence of his enemies. Sensible that Henry, agreeable to the prejudices of the times, would not be deemed a sovereign till crowned and anointed by a churchman, he immediately carried the young prince to Gloucester, where the ceremony of coronation was performed [28th Oct.], in the presence of Gualo the legate and of a few noblemen, by the bishops of Winchester and Bath^z. As the concurrence of the papal authority was requisite to support the tottering throne, Henry was obliged to swear fealty to the pope, and renew that homage to which his father had already subjected the kingdom^a: and in order to enlarge the authority of Pembroke, and to give him a more regular and legal title to it, a general council of the barons was soon after summoned at Bristol, where that nobleman was chosen protector of the realm. [11th Nov.]

Pembroke, that he might reconcile all men to the government of his pupil, made him grant a new charter of liberties, which, though mostly copied from the former concessions extorted from John, contains some alterations, which may be deemed remarkable^b. The full privilege of elections in the clergy, granted by the late king, was not confirmed, nor the liberty of going out of

^z M. Paris, p. 200. Hist. Croyl. Cont. p. 474. W. Heming. p. 562. Trivet, p. 168.

^a M. Paris, p. 200.

^b Rymer, vol. i. p. 215.

the kingdom without the royal consent : whence we may conclude, that Pembroke and the barons, jealous of the ecclesiastical power, both were desirous of renewing the king's claim to issue a *congé d'elire* to the monks and chapters, and thought it requisite to put some check to the frequent appeals to Rome. But what may chiefly surprise us is, that the obligation to which John had subjected himself, of obtaining the consent of the great council before he levied any aids or scutages upon the nation, was omitted ; and this article was even declared hard and severe, and was expressly left to future deliberation. But we must consider, that, though this limitation may perhaps appear to us the most momentous in the whole charter of John, it was not regarded in that light by the ancient barons, who were more jealous in guarding against particular acts of violence in the crown, than against such general impositions, which, unless they were evidently reasonable and necessary, could scarcely, without general consent, be levied upon men who had arms in their hands, and who could repel any act of oppression, by which they were all immediately affected. We accordingly find that Henry, in the course of his reign, while he gave frequent occasions for complaint, with regard to his violations of the Great Charter, never attempted, by his mere will, to levy any aids or scutages ; though he was often reduced to great necessities, and was refused supply by his people. So much easier was

it for him to transgress the law, when individuals alone were affected, than even to exert his acknowledged prerogatives, where the interest of the whole body was concerned.

This charter was again confirmed by the king in the ensuing year, with the addition of some articles to prevent the oppressions by sheriffs: and also with an additional charter of forests, a circumstance of great moment in those ages, when hunting was so much the occupation of the nobility, and when the king comprehended so considerable a part of the kingdom within his forests, which he governed by peculiar and arbitrary laws. All the forests, which had been inclosed since the reign of Henry II. were disforested; and new perambulations were appointed for that purpose: offences in the forests were declared to be no longer capital; but punishable by fine, imprisonment, and more gentle penalties: and all the proprietors of land recovered the power of cutting and using their own wood at their pleasure.

Thus these famous charters were brought nearly to the shape in which they have ever since stood; and they were, during many generations, the peculiar favourites of the English nation, and esteemed the most sacred rampart to national liberty and independence. As they secured the rights of all orders of men, they were anxiously defended by all, and became the basis, in a manner, of the English monarchy, and a kind of original

contract, which both limited the authority of the king, and ensured the conditional allegiance of his subjects. Though often violated, they were still claimed by the nobility and people; and as no precedents were supposed valid that infringed them, they rather acquired than lost authority, from the frequent attempts made against them in several ages by regal and arbitrary power.

While Pembroke, by renewing and confirming the Great Charter, gave so much satisfaction and security to the nation in general, he also applied himself successfully to individuals: he wrote letters, in the king's name, to all the malcontent barons; in which he represented to them, that, whatever jealousy and animosity they might have entertained against the late king, a young prince, the lineal heir of their ancient monarchs, had now succeeded to the throne, without succeeding either to the resentments or principles of his predecessor; that the desperate expedient, which they had employed, of calling in a foreign potentate, had, happily for them, as well as for the nation, failed of entire success; and it was still in their power, by a speedy return to their duty, to restore the independence of the kingdom, and to secure that liberty, for which they so zealously contended: that as all past offences of the barons were now buried in oblivion, they ought, on their part, to forget their complaints against their late sovereign, who, if he had been anywise blameable in his conduct, had left to his son the salutary warning, to

avoid the paths which had led to such fatal extremities: and that having now obtained a charter for their liberties, it was their interest to shew, by their conduct, that this acquisition was not incompatible with their allegiance, and that the rights of king and people, so far from being hostile and opposite, might mutually support and sustain each other^c.

These considerations, enforced by the character of honour and constancy, which Pembroke had ever maintained, had a mighty influence on the barons; and most of them began secretly to negociate with him, and many of them openly returned to their duty. The diffidence which Lewis discovered of their fidelity, forwarded this general propension towards the king; and when the French prince refused the government of the castle of Hertford to Robert Fitz-Walter, who had been so active against the late king, and who claimed that fortress as his property, they plainly saw that the English were excluded from every trust, and that foreigners had engrossed all the confidence and affection of their new sovereign^d. The excommunication, too, denounced by the legate against all the adherents of Lewis, failed not, in the turn which men's dispositions had taken, to produce a mighty effect upon them; and they were easily persuaded to consider a cause as

^c Rymer, vol. i. p. 215. Brady's App. N^o 143.

^d M. Paris, p. 200, 202.

impious, for which they had already entertained an unsurmountable aversion^c. Though Lewis made a journey to France, and brought over succours from that kingdom^f, he found on his return, that his party was still more weakened by the desertion of his English confederates, and that the death of John had, contrary to his expectations, given an incurable wound to his cause. The earls of Salisbury, Arundel, and Warrenne, together with William Mareshal, eldest son of the protector, had embraced Henry's party; and every English nobleman was plainly watching for an opportunity of returning to his allegiance. Pembroke was so much strengthened by these accessions, that he ventured to infest Mountsorel; though, upon the approach of the count of Perche with the French army, he desisted from his enterprise, and raised the siege^g. The count, elated with this success, marched to Lincoln; and being admitted into the town, he began to attack the castle, which he soon reduced to extremity. The protector summoned all his forces from every quarter, in order to relieve a place of such importance; and he appeared so much superior to the French, that they shut themselves up within the city, and resolved to act upon the defensive^h. But the garrison of the castle, having received a strong reinforcement, made a vigorous sally upon the

^c M. Paris, p. 200. M. West. p. 277.

^f Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 79. M. West. p. 277.

^g M. Paris, p. 203.

^h Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 81.

besiegers; while the English army, by concert, assaulted them in the same instant from without, mounted the walls by scalade, and bearing down all resistance, entered the city sword in hand. Lincoln was delivered over to be pillaged; the French army was totally routed; the count of Perche, with only two persons more, was killed; but many of the chief commanders, and about 400 knights, were made prisoners by the Englishⁱ. So little blood was shed in this important action, which decided the fate of one of the most powerful kingdoms in Europe; and such wretched soldiers were those ancient barons, who yet were unacquainted with every thing but arms!

Prince Lewis was informed of this fatal event while employed in the siege of Dover which was still valiantly defended against him by Hubert de Burgh. He immediately retreated to London, the centre and life of his party; and he there received intelligence of a new disaster, which put an end to all his hopes. A French fleet bringing over a strong reinforcement, had appeared on the coast of Kent, where they were attacked by the English under the command of Philip d'Albiny, and were routed with considerable loss. D'Albiny employed a stratagem against them, which is said to have contributed to the victory: having gained the wind of the French, he came down upon them with violence; and throwing in their faces a great

ⁱ M. Paris, p. 204, 205. Chron. de Mailr. p. 195,

quantity of quick-lime which he purposely carried on board, he so blinded them, that they were disabled from defending themselves^k.

After this second misfortune of the French, the English barons hastened every where to make peace with the protector, and by an early submission to prevent those attainders to which they were exposed on account of their rebellion. Lewis, whose cause was now totally desperate, began to be anxious for the safety of his person, and was glad, on any honourable conditions, to make his escape from a country where he found every thing was now become hostile to him. He concluded a peace with Pembroke, promised to evacuate the kingdom, and only stipulated, in return, an indemnity to his adherents, and a restitution of their honours and fortunes, together with the free and equal enjoyment of those liberties which had been granted to the rest of the nation^l. Thus was happily ended a civil war, which seemed to be founded on the most incurable hatred and jealousy, and had threatened the kingdom with the most fatal consequences.

The precautions which the king of France used in the conduct of this whole affair are remarkable. He pretended that his son had accepted of the offer from the English barons without his

^k M. Paris, p. 206. Ann. Waverl. p. 183. W. Heming. p. 563. Trivet, p. 169. M. West. p. 277. Knyghton, p. 2428.

^l Rymer, vol. i. p. 221. M. Paris, p. 207. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 83. M. West. p. 278. Knyghton, p. 2422.

advice, and contrary to his inclination: the armies sent to England were levied in Lewis's name: when that prince came over to France for aid, his father publicly refused to grant him any assistance, and would not so much as admit him to his presence: even after Henry's party acquired the ascendant, and Lewis was in danger of falling into the hands of his enemies, it was Blanche of Castile his wife, not the king his father, who raised armies and equipped fleets for his succour^m. All these artifices were employed, not to satisfy the pope; for he had too much penetration to be so easily imposed on: nor yet to deceive the people; for they were too gross even for that purpose: they only served for a colouring to Philip's cause; and in public affairs, men are often better pleased that the truth, though known to every body, should be wrapped up under a decent cover, than if it were exposed in open daylight to the eyes of all the world.

After the expulsion of the French, the prudence and equity of the protector's subsequent conduct contributed to cure entirely those wounds which had been made by intestine discord. He received the rebellious barons into favour: observed strictly the terms of peace which he had granted them; restored them to their possessions; and endeavoured, by an equal behaviour, to bury all past animosities in perpetual oblivion. The

^m M. Paris, p. 256. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 82.

clergy alone, who had adhered to Lewis, were sufferers in this revolution. As they had rebelled against their spiritual sovereign, by disregarding the interdict and excommunication, it was not in Pembroke's power to make any stipulations in their favour; and Gualo the legate prepared to take vengeance on them for their disobedienceⁿ. Many of them were deposed; many suspended; some banished; and all who escaped punishment made atonement for their offence by paying large sums to the legate, who amassed an immense treasure by this expedient.

DEATH OF THE PROTECTOR.

THE earl of Pembroke did not long survive the pacification, which had been chiefly owing to his wisdom and valour^o; and he was succeeded in the government by Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, and Hubert de Burgh the justiciary. The counsels of the latter were chiefly followed; and had he possessed equal authority in the kingdom with Pembroke, he seemed to be every way worthy of filling the place of that virtuous nobleman. But the licentious and powerful barons, who had once broken the reins of subjection to their prince, and had obtained by violence an enlargement of their liberties and independence, could ill be restrained by laws under a minority;

ⁿ Brady's Ap. N^o 144. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 83.

^o M. Paris, p. 210.

and the people, no less than the king, suffered from their outrages and disorders. They retained by force the royal castles, which they had seized during the past convulsions, or which had been committed to their custody by the protector^p: they usurped the king's demesnes^q: they oppressed their vassals: they infested their weaker neighbours: they invited all disorderly people to enter in their retinue, and to live upon their lands: and they gave them protection in all their robberies and extortions.

No one was more infamous for these violent and illegal practices than the earl of Albemarle; who, though he had early returned to his duty, and had been serviceable in expelling the French, augmented to the utmost the general disorder, and committed outrages in all the counties of the North. In order to reduce him to obedience, Hubert seized an opportunity of getting possession of Rockingham castle, which Albemarle had garrisoned with his licentious retinue: but this nobleman, instead of submitting, entered into a secret confederacy with Fawkes de Breauté, Peter de Mauleon, and other barons, and both fortified the castle of Biham for his defence, and made himself master, by surprise, of that of Fotheringay. Pandulf, who was restored to his legateship, was active in suppressing this rebellion; and with the concurrence of eleven bishops, he pronounced the

^p Trivet, p. 174.

^q Rymer, vol. i. p. 276.

sentence of excommunication against Albemarle and his adherents^r: an army was levied: a scutage of ten shillings, a knight's fee, was imposed on all the military tenants: Albemarle's associates gradually deserted him: and he himself was obliged at last to sue for mercy. He received a pardon, and was restored to his whole estate.

This impolitic lenity, too frequent in those times, was probably the result of a secret combination among the barons, who never could endure to see the total ruin of one of their own order: but it encouraged Fawkes de Breauté, a man whom king John had raised from a low origin, to persevere in the course of violence to which he had owed his fortune, and to set at nought all law and justice. When thirty-five verdicts were at one time found against him, on account of his violent expulsion of so many freeholders from their possessions; he came to the court of justice with an armed force, seized the judge who had pronounced the verdicts, and imprisoned him in Bedford castle. He then levied open war against the king; but being subdued and taken prisoner, his life was granted him; but his estate was confiscated, and he was banished the kingdom^s.

Justice was executed with greater severity against disorders less premeditated which broke out in London. A frivolous emulation in a match

^r Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 102.

^s Rymer, vol. i. p. 198. M. Paris, p. 221, 224. Ann. Waverl. p. 188. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 141, 146. M. West. p. 283.

of wrestling, between the Londoners on the one hand, and the inhabitants of Westminster and those of the neighbouring villages on the other, occasioned this commotion. The former rose in a body, and pulled down some houses belonging to the abbot of Westminster: but this riot, which, considering the tumultuous disposition familiar to that capital, would have been little regarded, seemed to become more serious by the symptoms which then appeared, of the former attachment of the citizens to the French interest. The populace, in the tumult, made use of the cry of war commonly employed by the French troops; *Mountjoy, mountjoy, God help us and our lord Lewis*. The justiciary made enquiry into the disorder; and finding one Constantine Fitz-Arnulf to have been the ringleader, an insolent man, who justified his crime in Hubert's presence, he proceeded against him by martial law, and ordered him immediately to be hanged, without trial or form of process. He also cut off the feet of some of Constantine's accomplices [†].

This act of power was complained of as an infringement of the Great Charter: yet the justiciary, in a parliament summoned at Oxford, (for the great councils about this time began to receive that appellation,) made no scruple to grant in the king's name a renewal and confirmation of that charter. When the assembly made applica-

[†] M. Paris, p. 217, 218, 259. Ann. Waverl. p. 187. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 129.

tion to the crown for this favour, as a law in those times seemed to lose its validity if not frequently renewed, William de Briewere, one of the council of regency, was so bold as to say openly, that those liberties were extorted by force, and ought not to be observed: but he was reprimanded by the archbishop of Canterbury, and was not countenanced by the king or his chief ministers^u. A new confirmation was demanded and granted two years after; and an aid, amounting to a fifteenth of all moveables, was given by the parliament, in return for this indulgence. The king issued writs anew to the sheriffs, enjoining the observance of the charter; but he inserted a remarkable clause in the writs, that those who paid not the fifteenth should not for the future be entitled to the benefit of those liberties^w.

The low state into which the crown was fallen made it requisite for a good minister to be attentive to the preservation of the royal prerogatives, as well as to the security of public liberty. Hubert applied to the pope, who had always great authority in the kingdom, and was now considered as its superior lord; and desired him to issue a bull, declaring the king to be of full age, and entitled to exercise in person all the acts of royalty^x. In consequence of this declaration, the justiciary resigned into Henry's hands the two important fortresses of the Tower and Dover castle, which

^u M. West. p. 282.

^w Clause 9 H. 3, m. 9. and m. 6. d.

^x M. Paris, p. 220.

had been entrusted to his custody; and he required the other barons to imitate his example. They refused compliance: the earls of Chester and Albemarle, John Constable of Chester, John de Lacy, Brian de l'Isle, and William de Cantel, with some others, even formed a conspiracy to surprise London, and met in arms at Waltham with that intention: but finding the king prepared for defence, they desisted from their enterprise. When summoned to court, in order to answer for their conduct, they scrupled not to appear, and to confess the design: but they told the king, that they had no bad intentions against his person, but only against Hubert de Burgh, whom they were determined to remove from his office^y. They appeared too formidable to be chastised; and they were so little discouraged by the failure of their first enterprise, that they again met in arms at Leicester, in order to seize the king, who then resided at Northampton: but Henry, informed of their purpose, took care to be so well armed and attended, that the barons found it dangerous to make the attempt; and they sat down and kept Christmas in his neighbourhood^z. The archbishop and the prelates, finding every thing tending towards a civil war, interposed with their authority, and threatened the barons with the sentence of excommunication, if they persisted in detaining the king's castles. This menace

^y Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 137.

^z M. Paris, p. 221. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 138.

at last prevailed : most of the fortresses were surrendered ; though the barons complained, that Hubert's castles were soon after restored to him, while the king still kept theirs in his own custody. There are said to have been 1115 castles at that time in England ^a.

It must be acknowledged, that the influence of the prelates and the clergy was often of great service to the public. Though the religion of that age can merit no better name than that of superstition, it served to unite together a body of men who had great sway over the people, and who kept the community from falling to pieces by the factions and independent power of the nobles. And what was of great importance, it threw a mighty authority into the hands of men, who, by their profession, were averse to arms and violence ; who tempered by their mediation the general disposition towards military enterprises ; and who still maintained, even amidst the shock of arms, those secret links, without which it is impossible for human society to subsist.

Notwithstanding these intestine commotions in England, and the precarious authority of the crown, Henry was obliged to carry on war in France ; and he employed to that purpose the fifteenth which had been granted him by parliament. Lewis VIII. who had succeeded to his father Philip, instead of complying with Henry's

^a Coke's Comment. on Magna Charta, chap. 17.

claim, who demanded the restitution of Normandy, and the other provinces wrested from England, made an irruption into Poictou, took Rochelle^b, after a long siege, and seemed determined to expel the English from the few provinces which still remained to them. Henry sent over his uncle, the earl of Salisbury, together with his brother prince Richard, to whom he had granted the earldom of Cornwall, which had escheated to the crown. Salisbury stopped the progress of Lewis's arms, and retained the Poictevin and Gascon vassals in their allegiance: but no military action of any moment was performed on either side. The earl of Cornwall, after two years' stay in Guienne, returned to England.

This prince was nowise turbulent or factious in his disposition: his ruling passion was to amass money, in which he succeeded so well as to become the richest subject in Christendom: yet his attention to gain threw him sometimes into acts of violence, and gave disturbance to the government. There was a manor, which had formerly belonged to the earldom of Cornwall, but had been granted to Waleran de Ties, before Richard had been invested with that dignity, and while the earldom remained in the crown. Richard claimed this manor, and expelled the proprietor by force: Waleran complained: the king ordered his brother to do justice to the man, and restore

^b Rymer, vol. i. p. 169. Trivet, p. 279.

him to his rights: the earl said, that he would not submit to these orders, till the cause should be decided against him by the judgment of his peers: Henry replied, that it was first necessary to reinstate Waleran in possession, before the cause could be tried; and he reiterated his orders to the earl^c. We may judge of the state of the government, when this affair had nearly produced a civil war. The earl of Cornwall, finding Henry peremptory in his commands, associated himself with the young earl of Pembroke, who had married his sister, and who was displeased on account of the king's requiring him to deliver up some royal castles which were in his custody. These two malcontents took into the confederacy the earls of Chester, Warrenne, Gloucester, Hereford, Warwic, and Ferrers, who were all disgusted on a like account^d. They assembled an army, which the king had not the power or courage to resist; and he was obliged to give his brother satisfaction, by grants of much greater importance than the manor, which had been the first ground of the quarrel^e.

The character of the king, as he grew to man's estate, became every day better known; and he was found in every respect unqualified for maintaining a proper sway among those turbulent barons, whom the feudal constitution subjected to his authority. Gentle, humane, and merciful,

^c M. Paris, p. 233.^d Ibid.^e Ibid.

even to a fault, he seems to have been steady in no other circumstance of his character; but to have received every impression from those who surrounded him, and whom he loved, for the time, with the most imprudent and most unreserved affection. Without activity or vigour, he was unfit to conduct war; without policy or art, he was ill fitted to maintain peace: his resentments, though hasty and violent, were not dreaded, while he was found to drop them with such facility; his friendships were little valued, because they were neither derived from choice, nor maintained with constancy. A proper pageant of state in a regular monarchy, where his ministers could have conducted all affairs in his name and by his authority; but too feeble in those disorderly times to sway a sceptre, whose weight depended entirely on the firmness and dexterity of the hand which held it.

HUBERT DE BURGH DISPLACED. 1227.

THE ablest and most virtuous minister that Henry ever possessed, was Hubert de Burgh^f; a man who had been steady to the crown in the most difficult and dangerous times, and who yet showed no disposition, in the height of his power, to enslave or oppress the people. The only excep-

^f Ypod. Neustriæ, p. 464.

tionable part of his conduct is that which is mentioned by Matthew Paris^g; if the fact be really true, and proceeded from Hubert's advice, namely, the recalling publicly and the annulling of the charter of forests, a concession so reasonable in itself, and so passionately claimed both by the nobility and people: but it must be confessed that this measure is so unlikely, both from the circumstances of the times and character of the minister, that there is reason to doubt of its reality, especially as it is mentioned by no other historian. Hubert, while he enjoyed his authority, had an entire ascendant over Henry, and was loaded with honours and favours beyond any other subject. Besides acquiring the property of many castles and manors, he married the eldest sister of the king of Scots, was created earl of Kent, and, by an unusual concession, was made chief justiciary of England for life: yet Henry, in a sudden caprice, threw off this faithful minister, and exposed him to the violent persecutions of his enemies. Among other frivolous crimes objected to him, he was accused of gaining the king's affections by enchantment, and of purloining from the royal treasury, a gem, which had the virtue to render the wearer invulnerable, and of sending this valuable curiosity to the prince of Wales^h. The nobility, who hated Hubert on account of his zeal in resuming the rights and possessions of the crown,

^g P. 232. M. West. p. 216. ascribes this counsel to Peter bishop of Winchester.

^h M. Paris, p. 259.

no sooner saw the opportunity favourable, than they inflamed the king's animosity against him, and pushed him to seek the total ruin of his minister. Hubert took sanctuary in a church: the king ordered him to be dragged from thence: he recalled those orders: he afterwards renewed them: he was obliged by the clergy to restore him to the sanctuary: he constrained him soon after to surrender himself prisoner, and he confined him in the castle of the Devizes. Hubert made his escape, was expelled the kingdom, was again received into favour, recovered a great share of the king's confidence, but never shewed any inclination to reinstate himself in power and authorityⁱ.

BISHOP OF WINCHESTER MINISTER.

THE man who succeeded him in the government of the king and kingdom, was Peter bishop of Winchester, a Poictevin by birth, who had been raised by the late king, and who was no less distinguished by his arbitrary principles and violent conduct, than by his courage and abilities. This prelate had been left by king John justiciary and regent of the kingdom during an expedition which that prince made into France; and his illegal ad-

ⁱ M. Paris, p. 259, 260, 261, 266. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 41, 42. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 220, 221. M. West. p. 291, 301.

ministration was one chief cause of that great combination among the barons, which finally extorted from the crown the charter of liberties, and laid the foundations of the English constitution. Henry, though incapable, from his character, of pursuing the same violent maxims which had governed his father, had imbibed the same arbitrary principles : and in prosecution of Peter's advice, he invited over a great number of Poitevins, and other foreigners, who, he believed, could more safely be trusted than the English, and who seemed useful to counterbalance the great and independent power of the nobility^k. Every office and command was bestowed on these strangers; they exhausted the revenues of the crown, already too much impoverished^l; they invaded the rights of the people; and their insolence, still more provoking than their power, drew on them the hatred and envy of all orders of men in the kingdom^m.

The barons formed a combination against this odious ministry, and withdrew from parliament, on pretence of the danger to which they were exposed from the machinations of the Poitevins. When again summoned to attend, they gave for answer, that the king should dismiss his foreigners, otherwise they would drive both him and them out of the kingdom, and put the crown on another head more worthy to wear itⁿ: such was

^k M. Paris, p. 263.^l Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 151.^m M. Paris, p. 258.ⁿ Ibid. p. 265.

the style they used to their sovereign ! They at last came to parliament, but so well attended, that they seemed in a condition to prescribe laws to the king and ministry. Peter des Roches, however, had in the interval found means of sowing dissension among them, and of bringing over to his party the earl of Cornwall, as well as the earls of Lincoln and Chester. The confederates were disconcerted in their measures : Richard, earl marshal, who had succeeded to that dignity on the death of his brother William, was chased into Wales ; he thence withdrew into Ireland where he was treacherously murdered by the contrivance of the bishop of Winchester^o. The estates of the more obnoxious barons were confiscated, without legal sentence or trial by their peers^p, and were bestowed with a profuse liberality on the Poictevins. Peter even carried his insolence so far as to declare publicly, that the barons of England must not pretend to put themselves on the same foot with those of France, or assume the same liberties and privileges : the monarch in the former country had a more absolute power than in the latter. It had been more justifiable for him to have said, that men, so unwilling to submit to the authority of laws, could with the worse grace claim any shelter or protection from them.

When the king at any time was checked in his illegal practices, and when the authority of the

^o Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 219.

^p M. Paris, p. 265.

Great Charter was objected to him, he was wont to reply; "Why should I observe this charter, which is neglected by all my grandees, both prelates and nobility?" It was very reasonably said to him; "You ought, sir, to set them the example^q."

So violent a ministry as that of the bishop of Winchester could not be of long duration; but its fall proceeded at last from the influence of the church, not from the efforts of the nobles. Edmond, the primate, came to court, attended by many of the other prelates, and represented to the king the pernicious measures embraced by Peter des Roches, the discontents of his people, the ruin of his affairs; and, after requiring the dismissal of the minister and his associates, threatened him with excommunication in case of his refusal. Henry, who knew that an excommunication so agreeable to the sense of the people, could not fail of producing the most dangerous effects, was obliged to submit: foreigners were banished: the natives were restored to their place in council^r: the primate, who was a man of prudence, and who took care to execute the laws, and observe the charter of liberties, bore the chief sway in the government.

^q M. Paris, p. 609.

^r M. Paris, p. 271, 272.

KING'S PARTIALITY TO FOREIGNERS. 1236.

BUT the English in vain flattered themselves that they should be long free from the dominion of foreigners. The king, having married Eleanor daughter of the count of Provence^s, was surrounded by a great number of strangers from that country, whom he caressed with the fondest affection, and enriched by an imprudent generosity^t. The bishop of Valence, a prelate of the house of Savoy, and maternal uncle to the queen, was his chief minister, and employed every art to amass wealth for himself and his relations. Peter of Savoy, a brother of the same family, was invested in the honour of Richmond, and received the rich wardship of earl Warrenne: Boniface of Savoy was promoted to the see of Canterbury: many young ladies were invited over from Provence, and married to the chief noblemen in England, who were the king's wards^u. And as the source of Henry's bounty began to fail, his Savoyard ministry applied to Rome, and obtained a bull; permitting him to resume all past grants; absolving him from the oath which he had taken to maintain them; even enjoining him to make such a resumption, and representing those grants as in-

^s Rymer, vol. 1. p. 448. M. Paris, p. 286.

^t M. Paris, p. 236, 301, 305, 316, 541. M. West. p. 302, 304.

^u M. Paris, p. 484. M. West. p. 338.

valid, on account of the prejudice which ensued from them to the Roman pontiff, in whom the superiority of the kingdom was vested^w. The opposition made to the intended resumption prevented it from taking place; but the nation saw the indignities to which the king was willing to submit, in order to gratify the avidity of his foreign favourites. About the same time he published in England the sentence of excommunication pronounced against the emperor Frederic, his brother-in-law^x; and said in excuse, that, being the pope's vassal, he was obliged by his allegiance to obey all the commands of his holiness. In this weak reign, when any neighbouring potentate insulted the king's dominions, instead of taking revenge for the injury, he complained to the pope as his superior lord, and begged him to give protection to his vassal^y.

GRIEVANCES.

THE resentment of the English barons rose high at the preference given to foreigners; but no remonstrance or complaint could ever prevail on the king to abandon them, or even to moderate his attachment towards them. After the Provençals and Savoyards might have been supposed pretty well satiated with the dignities and riches which

^w M. Paris, p. 295, 301.

^x Rymer, vol. i. p. 383.

^y Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 150.

they had acquired, a new set of hungry foreigners were invited over, and shared among them those favours, which the king ought in policy to have conferred on the English nobility, by whom his government could have been supported and defended. His mother, Isabella, who had been unjustly taken by the late king from the count de la Marche, to whom she was betrothed, was no sooner mistress of herself by the death of her husband, than she married that nobleman^z; and she had born him four sons, Guy, William, Geoffrey, and Aymer, whom she sent over to England in order to pay a visit to their brother. The good-natured and affectionate disposition of Henry was moved at the sight of such near relations; and he considered neither his own circumstances, nor the inclinations of his people, in the honours and riches which he conferred upon them^a. Complaints rose as high against the credit of the Gascon, as ever they had done against that of the Poictevin and of the Savoyard favourites; and to a nation prejudiced against them, all their measures appeared exceptionable and criminal. Violations of the Great Charter were frequently mentioned; and it is indeed more than probable, that foreigners, ignorant of the laws, and relying on the boundless affections of a weak prince, would, in an age when a regular administration was not any where known, pay more attention to their

^z Trivet, p. 174.

^a M. Paris, p. 491. M. West. p. 338. Knyghton, p. 2436.

present interest than to the liberties of the people. It is reported, that the Poictevins and other strangers, when the laws were at any time appealed to, in opposition to their oppressions, scrupled not to reply, *What did the English laws signify to them? They minded them not.* And as words are often more offensive than actions, this open contempt of the English tended much to aggravate the general discontent, and made every act of violence committed by the foreigners appear not only an injury, but an affront to them^b.

I reckon not among the violations of the Great Charter some arbitrary exertions of prerogative to which Henry's necessities pushed him, and which, without producing any discontent, were uniformly continued by all his successors, till the last century. As the parliament often refused him supplies, and that in a manner somewhat rude and indecent^c, he obliged his opulent subjects, particularly the citizens of London, to grant him loans of money; and it is natural to imagine, that the same want of œconomy which reduced him to the necessity of borrowing, would prevent him from being very punctual in the repayment^d. He demanded benevolences, or pretended voluntary contributions, from his nobility and prelates^e. He was the first king of England since the conquest, that could fairly be said to lie under the

^b M. Paris, p. 566, 666. Ann. Waverl. p. 214. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 335.

^c M. Paris, p. 301.

^d M. Paris, p. 406.

^e M. Paris, p. 507.

restraint of law; and he was also the first that practised the dispensing power, and employed the clause of *non obstante* in his grants and patents. When objections were made to this novelty, he replied, that the pope exercised that authority; and why might not he imitate the example? But the abuse which the pope made of his dispensing power, in violating the canons of general councils, in invading the privileges and customs of all particular churches, and in usurping on the rights of patrons, was more likely to excite the jealousy of the people, than to reconcile them to a similar practice in their civil government. Roger de Thurkesby, one of the king's justices, was so displeased with the precedent, that he exclaimed, *Alas! what times are we fallen into? Behold, the civil court is corrupted in imitation of the ecclesiastical, and the river is poisoned from that fountain.*

The king's partiality and profuse bounty to his foreign relations, and to their friends and favourites, would have appeared more tolerable to the English, had any thing been done meanwhile for the honour of the nation; or had Henry's enterprises in foreign countries been attended with any success or glory to himself or to the public: at least, such military talents in the king would have served to keep his barons in awe, and have given weight and authority to his government. But though he declared war against Lewis IX. in 1242, and made an expedition into Guienne, upon the invitation of his father-in-law, the count de

la Marche, who promised to join him with all his forces; he was unsuccessful in his attempts against that great monarch, was worsted at Taillebourg, was deserted by his allies, lost what remained to him of Poictou, and was obliged to return, with loss of honour, into England^f. The Gascon nobility were attached to the English government; because the distance of their sovereign allowed them to remain in a state of almost total independence: and they claimed, some time after, Henry's protection against an invasion which the king of Castile made upon that territory. Henry returned into Guienne, and was more successful in this expedition; but he thereby involved himself and his nobility in an enormous debt, which both increased their discontents, and exposed him to greater danger from their enterprises^g.

Want of œconomy, and an ill-judged liberality, were Henry's great defects; and his debts, even before this expedition, had become so troublesome, that he sold all his plate and jewels, in order to discharge them. When this expedient was first proposed to him, he asked, where he should find purchasers? It was replied, the citizens of London. *On my word*, said he, *if the treasury of Augustus were brought to sale, the citizens are able to be the purchasers: these clowns, who assume to themselves the name of barons, abound in every thing,*

^f M. Paris, p. 393, 394, 398, 399, 405. W. Heming. p. 574. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 153.

^g M. Paris, p. 614.

while we are reduced to necessities^h. And he was thenceforth observed to be more forward and greedy in his exactions upon the citizensⁱ.

ECCLESIASTICAL GRIEVANCES.

BUT the grievances which the English during this reign had reason to complain of in the civil government, seem to have been still less burthensome than those which they suffered from the usurpations and exactions of the court of Rome. On the death of Langton in 1228, the monks of Christ-church elected Walter de Hemesham, one of their own body, for his successor : but as Henry refused to confirm the election, the pope, at his desire, annulled it^k; and immediately appointed Richard chancellor of Lincoln, for archbishop, without waiting for a new election. On the death of Richard in 1231, the monks elected Ralph de Neville bishop of Chichester ; and though Henry was much pleased with the election, the pope, who thought that prelate too much attached to the crown, assumed the power of annulling his election^l. He rejected two clergymen more, whom the monks had successively chosen ; and he at last told them, that, if they would elect Edmond treasurer of the church of Salisbury, he

^h M. Paris, p. 501.

ⁱ M. Paris, p. 501, 507, 518, 578, 606, 625, 648.

^k M. Paris, p. 244.

^l Ibid. p. 254.

would confirm their choice ; and his nomination was complied with. The pope had the prudence to appoint both times very worthy primates ; but men could not forbear observing his intention of thus drawing gradually to himself the right of bestowing that important dignity.

The avarice, however, more than the ambition, of the see of Rome, seems to have been in this age the ground of general complaint. The papal ministers, finding a vast stock of power amassed by their predecessors, were desirous of turning it to immediate profit, which they enjoyed at home, rather than of enlarging their authority in distant countries, where they never intended to reside. Every thing was become venal in the Romish tribunals ; simony was openly practised ; no favours, and even no justice, could be obtained without a bribe, the highest bidder was sure to have the preference, without regard either to the merits of the person or of the cause ; and besides the usual perversions of right in the decision of controversies, the pope openly assumed an absolute and uncontrolled authority of setting aside, by the plenitude of his apostolic power, all particular rules, and all privileges of patrons, churches, and convents. On pretence of remedying these abuses, pope Honorius, in 1226, complaining of the poverty of his see as the source of all grievances, demanded from every cathedral two of the best prebends, and from every convent two monks' portions, to be set apart as a perpetual

and settled revenue of the papal crown: but all men being sensible that the revenue would continue for ever, the abuses immediately return, his demand was unanimously rejected. About three years after, the pope demanded and obtained the tenth of all ecclesiastical revenues, which he levied in a very oppressive manner; requiring payment before the clergy had drawn their rents or tithes, and sending about usurers, who advanced them the money at exorbitant interest. In the year 1240, Otho the legate, having in vain attempted the clergy in a body, obtained separately, by intrigues and menaces, large sums from the prelates and convents, and on his departure is said to have carried more money out of the kingdom than he left in it. This experiment was renewed four years after with success by Martin the nuncio, who brought from Rome powers of suspending and excommunicating all clergymen that refused to comply with his demands. The king, who relied on the pope for the support of his tottering authority, never failed to countenance those exactions.

Meanwhile, all the chief benefices of the kingdom were conferred on Italians; great numbers of that nation were sent over at one time to be provided for; non-residence and pluralities were carried to an enormous height; Mansel, the king's chaplain, is computed to have held at once seven hundred ecclesiastical livings; and the abuses became so evident as to be palpable to the

blindness of superstition itself. The people, entering into associations, rose against the Italian clergy : pillaged their barns ; wasted their lands ; insulted the persons of such of them as they found in the kingdom^m ; and when the justice made inquiry into the authors of this disorder, the guilt was found to involve so many, and those of such high rank, that it passed unpunished. At last, when Innocent IV., in 1245, called a general council at Lyons, in order to excommunicate the emperor Frederic, the king and nobility sent over agents to complain before the council of the rapacity of the Romish church. They represented, among many other grievances, that the benefices of the Italian clergy in England had been estimated, and were found to amount to 60,000 marksⁿ a year, a sum which exceeded the annual revenue of the crown itself^o. They obtained only an evasive answer from the pope ; but as mention had been made before the council, of the feudal subjection of England to the see of Rome, the English agents, at whose head was Roger Bigod earl of Norfolk, exclaimed against the pretension, and insisted, that king John had no right, with-

^m Rymer, vol. i. p. 323. M. Paris, p. 255, 257.

ⁿ Innocent's bull in Rymer, vol. i. p. 471, says only 50,000 marks a year.

^o M. Paris, p. 451. The customs were part of Henry's revenue, and amounted to 6000 pounds a year : they were at first small sums paid by the merchants for the use of the king's warehouses, measures, weights, &c. See Gilbert's History of the Excheq. p. 214.

out the consent of his barons, to subject the kingdom to so ignominious a servitude^p. The popes indeed, afraid of carrying matters too far against England, seem thenceforth to have little insisted on that pretension.

This check, received at the council of Lyons, was not able to stop the court of Rome in its rapacity: Innocent exacted the revenues of all vacant benefices, the twentieth of all ecclesiastical revenues without exception; the third of such as exceeded a hundred marks a year, and the half of such as were possessed by non-residents^q. He claimed the goods of all intestate clergymen^r; he pretended a title to inherit all money gotten by usury; he levied benevolences upon the people; and when the king, contrary to his usual practice, prohibited these exactions, he threatened to pronounce against him the same censures which he had emitted against the emperor Frederic^s.

But the most oppressive expedient employed by the pope, was the embarking of Henry in a project for the conquest of Naples, or Sicily on this side the Fare, as it was called; an enterprise which threw much dishonour on the king, and involved him, during some years, in great trouble and expence. The Romish church taking advantage of favourable incidents, had reduced the kingdom of Sicily to the same state of feudal vas-

^p M. Paris, p. 460.

^q M. Paris, p. 480. Ann. Burt. p. 305, 373.

^r M. Paris, p. 474.

^s M. Paris, p. 476.

salage which she pretended to extend over England, and which, by reason of the distance as well as high spirit of this latter kingdom, she was not able to maintain. After the death of the emperor Frederic II., the succession of Sicily devolved to Conradine, grandson of that monarch; and Mainfroy, his natural son, under pretence of governing the kingdom during the minority of the prince, had formed a scheme of establishing his own authority. Pope Innocent, who had carried on violent war against the emperor Frederic, and had endeavoured to dispossess him of his Italian dominions, still continued hostilities against his grandson; but being disappointed in all his schemes by the activity and artifices of Mainfroy, he found, that his own force alone was not sufficient to bring to a happy issue so great an enterprise. He pretended to dispose of the Sicilian crown, both as superior lord of that particular kingdom, and as vicar of Christ, to whom all kingdoms of the earth were subjected; and he made a tender of it to Richard earl of Cornwal, whose immense riches, he flattered himself, would be able to support the military operations against Mainfroy. As Richard had the prudence to refuse the present¹, he applied to the king, whose levity and thoughtless disposition gave Innocent more hopes of success; and he offered him the crown of Sicily for his second son Edmond².

¹ M. Paris, p. 650.

² Rymer, vol. i. p. 502, 512, 530. M. Paris, p. 599, 613.

Henry, allured by so magnificent a present, without reflecting on the consequences, without consulting either with his brother or the parliament, accepted of the insidious proposal; and gave the pope unlimited credit to expend whatever sums he thought necessary for completing the conquest of Sicily. Innocent, who was engaged by his own interests to wage war with Mainfroy, was glad to carry on his enterprises at the expence of his ally: Alexander IV. who succeeded him in the papal throne, continued the same policy: and Henry was surprised to find himself on a sudden involved in an immense debt, which he had never been consulted in contracting. The sum already amounted to 135,541 marks, beside interest^w; and he had the prospect, if he answered this demand, of being soon loaded with more exorbitant expences; if he refused it, of both incurring the pope's displeasure, and losing the crown of Sicily, which he hoped soon to have the glory of fixing on the head of his son.

He applied to the parliament for supplies; and that he might be sure not to meet with opposition, he sent no writs to the more refractory barons: but even those who were summoned, sensible of the ridiculous cheat imposed by the pope, determined not to lavish their money on such chimerical projects; and making a pretext of the absence of their brethren, they refused to take the king's de-

^w Rymer, vol. i. p. 587. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 319.

mands into consideration^x. In this extremity the clergy were his only resource; and as both their temporal and spiritual sovereign concurred in loading them, they were ill able to defend themselves against this united authority.

The pope published a crusade for the conquest of Sicily; and required every one who had taken the cross against the infidels, or had vowed to advance money for that service, to support the war against Mainfroy, a more terrible enemy, as he pretended, to the Christian faith than any Saracen^y. He levied a tenth on all ecclesiastical benefices in England for three years; and gave orders to excommunicate all bishops who made not punctual payment. He granted to the king the goods of intestate clergymen; the revenues of vacant benefices; the revenues of all non-residents^z. But these taxations, being levied by some rule, were deemed less grievous than another imposition, which arose from the suggestion of the bishop of Hereford, and which might have opened the door to endless and intolerable abuses.

This prelate, who resided at the court of Rome by a deputation from the English church, drew bills of different values, but amounting on the whole to 150,540 marks, on all the bishops and abbots of the kingdom; and granted these bills to Italian merchants, who it was pretended had advanced money for the service of the war against

^x M. Paris, p. 614.

^y Rymer, vol. i. p. 547, 548, &c.

^z Rymer, vol. i. p. 597, 598.

Mainfroy^a. As there was no likelihood of the English prelates submitting, without compulsion, to such an extraordinary demand, Rustand the legate was charged with the commission of employing authority to that purpose; and he summoned an assembly of the bishops and abbots, whom he acquainted with the pleasure of the pope and of the king. Great were the surprise and indignation of the assembly: the bishop of Worcester exclaimed, that he would lose his life rather than comply: the bishop of London said, that the pope and king were more powerful than he; but if his mitre were taken off his head, he would clap on a helmet in its place^b. The legate was no less violent on the other hand; and he told the assembly in plain terms, that all ecclesiastical benefices were the property of the pope, and he might dispose of them, either in whole or in part, as he saw proper^c. In the end, the bishops and abbots, being threatened with excommunication, which made all their revenues fall into the king's hands, were obliged to submit to the exaction: and the only mitigation which the legate allowed them was, that the tenths already granted should be accepted as a partial payment of the bills. But the money was still insufficient for the pope's purpose: the conquest of Sicily was as remote as ever: the demands which came from Rome were endless: Pope Alexander became so urgent a cre-

^a M. Paris, p. 612, 628. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 54.

^b M. Paris, p. 614.

^c Ibid. p. 619.

ditor, that he sent over a legate to England; threatening the kingdom with an interdict, and the king with excommunication, if the arrears which he pretended to be due to him were not instantly remitted^d. And at last Henry, sensible of the cheat, began to think of breaking off the agreement, and of resigning into the pope's hands that crown which it was not intended by Alexander that he or his family should ever enjoy^e.

EARL OF CORNWAL ELECTED KING OF THE ROMANS.

THE earl of Cornwall had now reason to value himself on his foresight, in refusing the fraudulent bargain with Rome, and in preferring the solid honours of an opulent and powerful prince of the blood of England, to the empty and precarious glory of a foreign dignity. But he had not always firmness sufficient to adhere to this resolution: his vanity and ambition prevailed at last over his prudence and his avarice; and he was engaged in an enterprise no less extensive and vexatious than that of his brother, and not attended with much greater probability of success. The immense opulence of Richard having made the German princes cast their eye on him as a candidate for the empire, he was tempted to expend vast sums of

^d Rymer, vol. i. p. 624. M. Paris, p. 648.

^e Rymer, vol. i. p. 630.

money on his election ; and he succeeded so far as to be chosen king of the Romans, which seemed to render his succession infallible to the Imperial throne. He went over to Germany, and carried out of the kingdom no less a sum than seven hundred thousand marks, if we may credit the account given by some ancient authors^f, which is probably much exaggerated^g. His money, while it lasted, procured him friends and partizans : but it was soon drained from him by the avidity of the German princes ; and having no personal or family connections in that country, and no solid foundation of power, he found at last that he had lavished away the frugality of a whole life, in order to procure a splendid title ; and that his absence from England, joined to the weakness of his brother's government, gave reins to the factious and turbulent dispositions of the English

^fM. Paris, p. 638. The same author, a few pages before, makes Richard's treasures amount to little more than half the sum, p. 634. The king's dissipations and expences, throughout his whole reign according to the same author, had amounted only to about 940,000 marks, p. 638.

^gThe sums mentioned by ancient authors, who were almost all monks, are often improbable, and never consistent. But we know, from an infallible authority, the public remonstrances to the council of Lyons, that the king's revenues were below 60,000 marks a year. His brother therefore could never have been master of 700,000 marks ; especially as he did not sell his estates in England, as we learn from the same author : and we hear afterwards of his ordering all his woods to be cut, in order to satisfy the rapacity of the German princes : his son succeeded to the earldom of Cornwall and his other revenues.

barons, and involved his own country and family in great calamities.

DISCONTENTS OF THE BARONS.

THE successful revolt of the nobility from king John, and their imposing on him and his successors limitations of their royal power, had made them feel their own weight and importance, had set a dangerous precedent of resistance, and being followed by a long minority, had impoverished as well as weakened that crown, which they were at last induced from the fear of worse consequences, to replace on the head of young Henry. In the king's situation, either great abilities and vigour were requisite to overawe the barons, or great caution and reserve to give them no pretence for complaints; and it must be confessed that this prince was possessed of neither of these talents. He had not prudence to chuse right measures; he wanted even that constancy which sometimes gives weight to wrong ones; he was entirely devoted to his favourites, who were always foreigners; he lavished on them without discretion his diminished revenue; and finding that his barons indulged their disposition towards tyranny, and observed not to their own vassals the same rules which they had imposed on the crown, he was apt, in his administration, to neglect all the salutary articles of the Great Charter; which he remarked

to be so little regarded by his nobility. This conduct had extremely lessened his authority in the kingdom ; had multiplied complaints against him ; and had frequently exposed him to affronts, and even to dangerous attempts upon his prerogative. In the year 1244, when he desired a supply from parliament, the barons, complaining of the frequent breaches of the Great Charter, and of the many fruitless applications which they had formerly made for the redress of this and other grievances, demanded in return that he should give them the nomination of the great justiciary and of the chancellor, to whose hands chiefly the administration of justice was committed : and, if we may credit the historian^h, they had formed the plan of other limitations, as well as of associations to maintain them, which would have reduced the king to be an absolute cypher, and have held the crown in perpetual pupillage and dependance. The king, to satisfy them, would agree to nothing but a renewal of the charter, and a general permission to excommunicate all the violaters of it : and he received no supply, except a scutage of twenty shillings on each knight's fee for the marriage of his eldest daughter to the king of Scotland ; a burthen which was expressly annexed to their feudal tenures.

Four years after, in a full parliament, when Henry demanded a new supply, he was openly

^h M. Paris, p. 432.

reproached with a breach of his word, and the frequent violations of the charter. He was asked whether he did not blush to desire any aid from his people whom he professedly hated and despised, to whom on all occasions he preferred aliens and foreigners, and who groaned under the oppressions which he either permitted or exercised over them. He was told that, besides disparaging his nobility by forcing them to contract unequal and mean marriages with strangers, no rank of men was so low as to escape vexations from him or his ministers; that even the victuals consumed in his household, the clothes which himself and his servants wore, still more the wine which they used, were all taken by violence from the lawful owners, and no compensation was ever made them for the injury; that foreign merchants, to the great prejudice and infamy of the kingdom, shunned the English harbours, as if they were possessed by pirates, and the commerce with all nations was thus cut off by these acts of violence; that loss was added to loss, and injury to injury, while the merchants, who had been despoiled of their goods, were also obliged to carry them at their own charge to whatever place the king was pleased to appoint them; that even the poor fishermen on the coast could not escape his oppressions and those of his courtiers; and finding that they had not full liberty to dispose of their commodities in the English market, were frequently constrained to carry them to foreign ports, and to hazard all the perils

of the ocean, rather than those which awaited them from his oppressive emissaries ; and that his very religion was a ground of complaint to his subjects, while they observed that the waxen tapers and splendid silks, employed in so many useless processions, were the spoils which he had forcibly ravished from the true ownersⁱ. Throughout this remonstrance, in which the complaints derived from an abuse of the ancient right of purveyance may be supposed to be somewhat exaggerated, there appears a strange mixture of regal tyranny in the practices which gave rise to it, and of aristocratical liberty, or rather licentiousness, in the expressions employed by the parliament. But a mixture of this kind is observable in all the ancient feudal governments ; and both of them proved equally hurtful to the people.

As the king, in answer to their remonstrance, gave the parliament only good words and fair promises, attended with the most humble submissions, which they had often found deceitful, he obtained at that time no supply ; and therefore in the year 1253, when he found himself again under the necessity of applying to parliament, he had provided a new pretence, which he deemed infallible, and taking the vow of a crusade, he demanded their assistance in that pious enterprise^k. The parliament however for some time hesitated to comply ; and the ecclesiastical order sent a deputa-

ⁱ M. Paris, p. 498. See farther, p. 578. M. West. p. 348.

^k M. Paris, p. 518, 558, 568. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 293.

tion, consisting of four prelates, the primate, and the bishops of Winchester, Salisbury, and Carlisle, in order to remonstrate with him on his frequent violations of their privileges, the oppressions with which he had loaded them and all his subjects¹, and the uncanonical and forced elections which were made to vacant dignities. “It is true,” replied the king, “I have been somewhat faulty in this particular: I obtruded you, my lord of Canterbury, upon your see: I was obliged to employ both entreaties and menaces, my lord of Winchester, to have you elected; my proceedings, I confess, were very irregular, my lords of Salisbury and Carlisle, when I raised you from the lowest stations to your present dignities: I am determined henceforth to correct these abuses; and it will also become you, in order to make a thorough reformation, to resign your present benefices; and try to enter again in a more regular and canonical manner^m.” The bishops, surprised at these unexpected sarcasms, replied, that the question was not at present how to correct past errors, but to avoid them for the future. The king promised redress both of ecclesiastical and civil grievances; and the parliament in return agreed to grant him a supply, a tenth of the ecclesiastical benefices, and a scutage of three marks on each knight’s fee: but as they had experienced his frequent

¹ M. Paris, p. 568.^m Ibid. p. 579.

breach of promise, they required that he should ratify the Great Charter in a manner still more authentic and more solemn than any which he had hitherto employed. All the prelates and abbots were assembled: they held burning tapers in their hands: the Great Charter was read before them: they denounced the sentence of excommunication against every one who should thenceforth violate the fundamental law: they threw their tapers on the ground, and exclaimed, *May the soul of every one who incurs this sentence so stink and corrupt in hell!* The king bore a part in this ceremony; and subjoined: "So help me God, I
" will keep all these articles inviolate, as I am a
" man, as I am a christian, as I am a knight, and
" as I am a king crowned and anointed." Yet was the tremendous ceremony no sooner finished than his favourites, abusing his weakness, made him return to the same arbitrary and irregular administration; and the reasonable expectations of his people were thus perpetually eluded and disappointed°.

° M. Paris, p. 580. Ann. Burt. p. 323. Ann. Waverl. p. 210.
W. Heming. p. 571. M. West. p. 353.

° M. Paris, p. 597, 608.

SIMON DE MOUNTFORT, EARL OF LEICESTER.

ALL these imprudent and illegal measures afforded a pretence to Simon de Mountfort, earl of Leicester, to attempt an innovation in the government, and to wrest the sceptre from the feeble and irresolute hand which held it. This nobleman was a younger son of that Simon de Mountfort, who had conducted with such valour and renown the crusade against the Albigenses, and who, though he tarnished his famous exploits by cruelty and ambition, had left a name very precious to all the bigots of that age, particularly to the ecclesiastics. A large inheritance in England fell by succession to this family; but as the elder brother enjoyed still more opulent possessions in France, and could not perform fealty to two masters, he transferred his right to Simon his younger brother, who came over to England, did homage for his lands, and was raised to the dignity of earl of Leicester. In the year 1238, he espoused Eleanor dowager of William earl of Pembroke, and sister to the king^p; but the marriage of this princess with a subject and a foreigner, though contracted with Henry's consent, was loudly complained of by the earl of Cornwall and all the barons of England; and Leicester was supported against their violence by the king's favour

^p M. Paris, p. 314.

and authority alone^q. But he had no sooner established himself in his possessions and dignities, than he acquired, by insinuation and address, a strong interest with the nation, and gained equally the affections of all orders of men. He lost, however, the friendship of Henry from the usual levity and fickleness of that prince; he was banished the court; he was recalled; he was entrusted with the command of Guienne^r, where he did good service and acquired honour; he was again disgraced by the king, and his banishment from court seemed now final and irrevocable. Henry called him traitor to his face; Leicester gave him the lie, and told him that if he were not his sovereign he would soon make him repent of that insult. Yet was this quarrel accommodated, either from the good-nature or timidity of the king; and Leicester was again admitted into some degree of favour and authority. But as this nobleman was become too great to preserve an entire complaisance to Henry's humours, and to act in subserviency to his other minions; he found more advantage in cultivating his interest with the public, and in enflaming the general discontents which prevailed against the administration. He filled every place with complaints against the infringement of the Great Charter, the acts of violence committed on the people, the combination between the pope and the king in their tyranny and

^q M. Paris, p. 315.

^r Rymer, vol. i. p. 459, 513.

extortions, Henry's neglect of his native subjects and barons; and though himself a foreigner, he was more loud than any in representing the indignity of submitting to the dominion of foreigners. By his hypocritical pretensions to devotion he gained the favour of the zealots and clergy: by his seeming concern for public good he acquired the affections of the public: and besides the private friendships which he had cultivated with the barons, his animosity against the favourites created an union of interests between him and that powerful order.

A recent quarrel which broke out between Leicester and William de Valence, Henry's half-brother, and chief favourite, brought matters to extremity^a, and determined the former to give full scope to his bold and unbounded ambition, which the laws and the king's authority had hitherto with difficulty restrained. He secretly called a meeting of the most considerable barons, particularly Humphrey de Bohun high constable, Roger Bigod earl mareschal, and the earls of Warwick and Gloucester; men who by their family and possessions stood in the first rank of the English nobility. He represented to this company the necessity of reforming the state, and of putting the execution of the laws into other hands than those which had hitherto appeared, from repeated experience, so unfit for the charge with which

^a M. Paris, p. 649.

they were entrusted. He exaggerated the oppressions exercised against the lower orders of the state, the violations of the barons' privileges, the continued depredations made on the clergy, and, in order to aggravate the enormity of his conduct, he appealed to the Great Charter, which Henry had so often ratified, and which was calculated to prevent for ever the return of those intolerable grievances. He magnified the generosity of their ancestors, who, at a great expence of blood, had extorted that famous concession from the crown; but lamented their own degeneracy, who allowed so important an advantage, once obtained, to be wrested from them by a weak prince and by insolent strangers. And he insisted that the king's word, after so many submissions and fruitless promises on his part, could no longer be relied on; and that nothing but his absolute inability to violate national privileges could thenceforth ensure the regular observance of them.

These topics, which were founded in truth, and suited so well the sentiments of the company, had the desired effect; and the barons embraced a resolution of redressing the public grievances, by taking into their own hands the administration of government. Henry having summoned a parliament, in expectation of receiving supplies for his Sicilian project, the barons appeared in the hall, clad in complete armour, and with their swords by their side: the king on his entry, struck with the unusual appearance, asked them

what was their purpose, and whether they pretended to make him their prisoner'? Roger Bigod replied in the name of the rest, that he was not their prisoner, but their sovereign; that they even intended to grant him large supplies, in order to fix his son on the throne of Sicily; that they only expected some return for this expence and service; and that, as he had frequently made submissions to the parliament, had acknowledged his past errors, and had still allowed himself to be carried into the same path, which gave them such just reason of complaint, he must now yield to more strict regulations, and confer authority on those who were able and willing to redress the national grievances. Henry, partly allured by the hopes of supply, partly intimidated by the union and martial appearance of the barons, agreed to their demand; and promised to summon another parliament at Oxford, in order to digest the new plan of government, and to elect the persons who were to be entrusted with the chief authority.

PROVISIONS OF OXFORD. JUNE 11.

THIS parliament, which the royalists, and even the nation, from experience of the confusions that attended its measures, afterwards denominated

the *mad parliament*, met on the day appointed; and as all the barons brought along with them their military vassals, and appeared with an armed force, the king, who had taken no precautions against them, was in reality a prisoner in their hands, and was obliged to submit to all the terms which they were pleased to impose upon him. Twelve barons were selected from among the king's ministers, twelve more were chosen by parliament: to these twenty-four, unlimited authority was granted to reform the state; and the king himself took an oath, that he would maintain whatever ordinances they should think proper to enact for that purpose^u. Leicester was at the head of this supreme council, to which the legislative power was thus in reality transferred; and all their measures were taken by his secret influence and direction. The first step bore a specious appearance, and seemed well calculated for the end which they professed to be the object of all these innovations: they ordered that four knights should be chosen by each county; that they should make inquiry into the grievances of which their neighbourhood had reason to complain, and should attend the ensuing parliament, in order to give information to that assembly of the state of their particular counties^w: a nearer approach to our present constitution than had

^u Rymer, vol. i. p. 655. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 334. Knyghton, p. 2445.

^w M. Paris, p. 657. Addit. p. 140. Ann. Burt. p. 412.

been made by the barons in the reign of king John, when the knights were only appointed to meet in their several counties, and there to draw up a detail of their grievances. Meanwhile the twenty-four barons proceeded to enact some regulations, as a redress of such grievances as were supposed to be sufficiently notorious. They ordered that three sessions of parliament should be regularly held every year, in the months of February, June, and October; that a new sheriff should be annually elected by the votes of the freeholders in each county^{*}; that the sheriffs should have no power of fining the barons who did not attend their courts, or the circuits of the justiciaries; that no heirs should be committed to the wardship of foreigners, and no castles intrusted to their custody; and that no new warrens or forests should be created, nor the revenues of any counties or hundreds be let to farm. Such were the regulations which the twenty-four barons established at Oxford, for the redress of public grievances.

But the earl of Leicester and his associates, having advanced so far to satisfy the nation, instead of continuing in this popular course, or granting the king that supply which they had promised him, immediately provided for the extension and continuance of their own authority. They roused anew the popular clamour which had

^{*} Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 236.

long prevailed against foreigners: and they fell with the utmost violence on the king's half-brothers who were supposed to be the authors of all national grievances, and whom Henry had no longer any power to protect. The four brothers, sensible of their danger, took to flight, with an intention of making their escape out of the kingdom; they were eagerly pursued by the barons; Aymer, one of the brothers, who had been elected to the see of Winchester, took shelter in his episcopal palace, and carried the others along with him; they were surrounded in that place, and threatened to be dragged out by force, and to be punished for their crimes and misdemeanors; and the king, pleading the sacredness of an ecclesiastical sanctuary, was glad to extricate them from this danger by banishing them the kingdom. In this act of violence, as well as in the former usurpations of the barons, the queen and her uncles were thought to have secretly concurred; being jealous of the credit acquired by the brothers, which, they found, had eclipsed and annihilated their own.

USURPATIONS OF THE BARONS.

BUT the subsequent proceedings of the twenty-four barons were sufficient to open the eyes of the nation, and to prove their intention of reducing, for ever, both the king and the people under the

arbitrary power of a very narrow aristocracy, which must at last have terminated either in anarchy, or in a violent usurpation and tyranny. They pretended that they had not yet digested all the regulations necessary for the reformation of the state and for the redress of grievances ; and they must still retain their power, till that great purpose were thoroughly effected : in other words, that they must be perpetual governors, and must continue to reform, till they were pleased to abdicate their authority. They formed an association among themselves, and swore that they would stand by each other with their lives and fortunes : they displaced all the chief officers of the crown, the justiciary, the chancellor, the treasurer ; and advanced either themselves or their own creatures in their place : even the offices of the king's household were disposed of at their pleasure : the government of all the castles was put into hands in whom they found reason to confide : and the whole power of the state being thus transferred to them, they ventured to impose an oath, by which all the subjects were obliged to swear, under the penalty of being declared public enemies, that they would obey and execute all the regulations, both known and unknown, of the twenty-four barons : and all this, for the greater glory of God, the honour of the church, the service of the king, and the advantage of the kingdom⁷. No one

⁷ Chron. T. Wykes, p. 52.

dared to withstand this tyrannical authority : prince Edward himself, the king's eldest son, a youth of eighteen, who began to give indications of that great and manly spirit which appeared throughout the whole course of his life, was, after making some opposition, constrained to take that oath, which really deposed his father and his family from sovereign authority ². Earl Warrenne was the last person in the kingdom that could be brought to give the confederated barons this mark of submission.

But the twenty-four barons, not content with the usurpation of the royal power, introduced an innovation in the constitution of parliament which was of the utmost importance. They ordained, that this assembly should chuse a committee of twelve persons, who should, in the intervals of the sessions, possess the authority of the whole parliament, and should attend, on a summons, the person of the king, in all his motions. But so powerful were these barons, that this regulation was also submitted to ; the whole government was overthrown, or fixed on new foundations ; and the monarchy was totally subverted, without its being possible for the king to strike a single stroke in defence of the constitution against the newly-elected oligarchy.

The report that the king of the Romans intended to pay a visit to England, gave alarm to

² Ann. Burt. p. 411.

the ruling barons, who dreaded lest the extensive influence and established authority of that prince would be employed to restore the prerogatives of his family, and overturn their plan of government^a. They sent over the bishop of Worcester, who met him at St. Omars; asked him, in the name of the barons, the reason of his journey, and how long he intended to stay in England; and insisted that, before he entered the kingdom, he should swear to observe the regulations established at Oxford. On Richard's refusal to take this oath, they prepared to resist him as a public enemy; they fitted out a fleet, assembled an army, and exciting the inveterate prejudices of the people against foreigners, from whom they had suffered so many oppressions, spread the report, that Richard, attended by a number of strangers, meant to restore by force the authority of his exiled brothers, and to violate all the securities provided for public liberty. The king of the Romans was at last obliged to submit to the terms required of him^b.

But the barons, in proportion to their continuance in power, began gradually to lose that popularity which had assisted them in obtaining it; and men repined, that regulations, which were occasionally established for the reformation of the state, were likely to become perpetual, and to subvert entirely the ancient constitution. They

^a M. Paris, p. 661.

^b Ibid. p. 661, 662. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 53.

were apprehensive lest the power of the nobles, always oppressive, should now exert itself without control, by removing the counterpoise of the crown ; and their fears were increased by some new edicts of the barons, which were plainly calculated to procure to themselves an impunity in all their violences. They appointed that the circuits of the itinerant justices, the sole check on their arbitrary conduct, should be held only once in seven years ; and men easily saw that a remedy, which returned after such long intervals, against an oppressive power, which was perpetual, would prove totally insignificant and useless^c. The cry became loud in the nation, that the barons should finish their intended regulations. The knights of the shires, who seem now to have been pretty regularly assembled, and sometimes in a separate house, made remonstrances against the slowness of their proceedings. They represented that, though the king had performed all the conditions required of him, the barons had hitherto done nothing for the public good, and had only been careful to promote their own private advantage, and to make inroads on the royal authority ; and they even appealed to prince Edward, and claimed his interposition for the interests of the nation and the reformation of the government^d. The prince replied, that though it was from constraint, and contrary to his private sentiments, he had sworn

^c M. Paris, p. 667. Trivet, p. 209.

^d Annal. Burt. p. 427.

to maintain the provisions of Oxford, he was determined to observe his oath: but he sent a message to the barons, requiring them to bring their undertaking to a speedy conclusion, and fulfil their engagements to the public: otherwise, he menaced them, that at the expence of his life he would oblige them to do their duty, and would shed the last drop of his blood in promoting the interests, and satisfying the just wishes of the nation^c.

The barons, urged by so pressing a necessity, published at last a new code of ordinances for the reformation of the state^f: but the expectations of the people were extremely disappointed, when they found that these consisted only of some trivial alterations in the municipal law; and still more, when the barons pretended that the task was not yet finished, and that they must farther prolong their authority, in order to bring the work of reformation to the desired period. The current of popularity was now much turned to the side of the crown; and the barons had little to rely on for their support, besides the private influence and power of their families, which, though exorbitant, was likely to prove inferior to the combination of king and people. Even this basis of power was daily weakened by their intestine jealousies and animosities; their ancient and inveterate quarrels broke out when they came to share the

^c Annal. Burt. p. 427.

^f Ibid. p. 428, 430.

spoils of the crown ; and the rivalry between the earls of Leicester and Gloucester, the chief leaders among them, began to disjoint the whole confederacy. The latter, more moderate in his pretensions, was desirous of stopping or retarding the career of the barons' usurpations ; but the former, enraged at the opposition which he met with in his own party, pretended to throw up all concern in English affairs ; and he retired into France^g.

The kingdom of France, the only state with which England had any considerable intercourse, was at this time governed by Lewis IX. a prince of the most singular character that is to be met with in all records of history. This monarch united, to the mean and abject superstition of a monk, all the courage and magnanimity of the greatest hero ; and, what may be deemed more extraordinary, the justice and integrity of a disinterested patriot, the mildness and humanity of an accomplished philosopher. So far from taking advantage of the divisions among the English, or attempting to expel those dangerous rivals from the provinces which they still possessed in France, he had entertained many scruples with regard to the sentence of attainder pronounced against the king's father, had even expressed some intention of restoring the other provinces, and was only prevented from taking that imprudent resolution by the united remonstrances of his own barons,

^g Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 348.

who represented the extreme danger of such a measure^b, and, what had a greater influence on Lewis, the justice of punishing, by a legal sentence, the barbarity and felony of John. Whenever this prince interposed in English affairs, it was always with an intention of composing the differences between the king and his nobility; he recommended to both parties every peaceable and reconciling measure; and he used all his authority with the earl of Leicester, his native subject, to bend him to a compliance with Henry. He made a treaty with England, at a time when the distractions of that kingdom were at the greatest height, and when the king's authority was totally annihilated; and the terms which he granted might, even in a more prosperous state of their affairs, be deemed reasonable and advantageous to the English. He yielded up some territories which had been conquered from Poictou and Guienne; he ensured the peaceable possession of the latter province to Henry; he agreed to pay that prince a large sum of money; and he only required that the king should, in return, make a final cession of Normandy, and the other provinces, which he could never entertain any hopes of recovering by force of armsⁱ. The cession was ratified by Henry, by his two sons and two daughters, and by the king of the Romans and his three sons: Leicester

^b M. Paris, p. 604.

ⁱ Rymer, vol. i. p. 675. M. Paris, p. 566. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 53. Trivet, p. 208. M. West. p. 371.

alone, either moved by a vain arrogance, or desirous to ingratiate himself with the English populace, protested against the deed, and insisted on the right, however distant, which might accrue to his consort^k. Lewis saw, in this obstinacy, the unbounded ambition of the man; and as the barons insisted that the money due by treaty should be at their disposal, not at Henry's, he also saw, and probably with regret, the low condition to which this monarch, who had more erred from weakness than from any bad intentions, was reduced by the turbulence of his own subjects.

But the situation of Henry soon after wore a more favourable aspect. The twenty-four barons had now enjoyed the sovereign power near three years; and had visibly employed it, not for the reformation of the state, which was their first pretence, but for the aggrandisement of themselves and of their families. The breach of trust was apparent to all the world: every order of men felt it, and murmured against it: the dissensions among the barons themselves, which increased the evil, made also the remedy more obvious and easy: and the secret desertion, in particular, of the earl of Gloucester to the crown, seemed to promise Henry certain success in any attempt to resume his authority. Yet durst he not take that step, so reconcileable both to justice and policy, without making a previous application to Rome, and

^k Chron. T. Wykes, p. 53.

desiring an absolution from his oaths and engagements¹.

The pope was at this time much dissatisfied with the conduct of the barons ; who, in order to gain the favour of the people and clergy of England, had expelled all the Italian ecclesiastics, had confiscated their benefices, and seemed determined to maintain the liberties and privileges of the English church, in which the rights of patronage, belonging to their own families, were included. The extreme animosity of the English clergy against the Italians was also a source of his disgust to this order ; and an attempt which had been made by them for farther liberty and greater independence on the civil power, was therefore less acceptable to the court of Rome^m. About the same time that the barons at Oxford had annihilated the prerogatives of the monarchy, the clergy met in a synod at Merton, and passed several ordinances, which were no less calculated to promote their own grandeur at the expence of the crown. They decreed, that it was unlawful to try ecclesiastics by secular judges ; that the clergy were not to regard any prohibitions from civil courts ; that lay-patrons had no right to confer spiritual benefices ; that the magistrate was obliged, without farther enquiry, to imprison all excommunicated persons ; and that ancient usage, without any particular grant or charter, was a sufficient au-

¹ Ann. Burt. p. 389.

^m Rymer, vol. i. p. 755.

thority for any clerical possessions or privileges". About a century before, these claims would have been supported by the court of Rome beyond the most fundamental articles of faith: they were the chief points maintained by the great martyr, Becket; and his resolution in defending them had exalted him to the high station which he held in the catalogue of Romish saints. But principles were changed with the times: the pope was become somewhat jealous of the great independence of the English clergy, which made them stand less in need of his protection, and even emboldened them to resist his authority, and to complain of the preference given to the Italian courtiers, whose interests, it was natural to imagine, were the chief object of his concern. He was ready, therefore, on the king's application, to annul these new constitutions of the church of England°. And, at the same time, he absolved the king and all his subjects from the oath which they had taken to observe the provisions of Oxford^p.

PRINCE EDWARD.

PRINCE Edward, whose liberal mind, though in such early youth, had taught him the great prejudice which his father had incurred, by his levity,

ⁿ Ann. Burt. p. 389.

^o Rymer, vol. i. p. 755.

^p Rymer, vol. i. p. 722. M. Paris, p. 666. W. Heming. p. 580. Ypod. Neust. p. 468. Knyghton, p. 2446.

inconstancy, and frequent breach of promise, refused for a long time to take advantage of this absolution; and declared that the provisions of Oxford, how unreasonable soever in themselves, and how much soever abused by the barons, ought still to be adhered to by those who had sworn to observe them⁹. He himself had been constrained by violence to take that oath; yet he was determined to keep it. By this scrupulous fidelity, the prince acquired the confidence of all parties, and was afterwards enabled to recover fully the royal authority, and to perform such great actions, both during his own reign and that of his father.

The situation of England, during this period, as well as that of most European kingdoms, was somewhat peculiar. There was no regular military force maintained in the nation: the sword, however, was not, properly speaking, in the hands of the people: the barons were alone entrusted with the defence of the community; and after any effort which they made, either against their own prince or against foreigners, as the military retainers departed home, the armies were disbanded, and could not speedily be re-assembled at pleasure. It was easy, therefore, for a few barons, by a combination, to get the start of the other party, to collect suddenly their troops, and to appear unexpectedly in the field with an army, which their antagonists, though equal, or even superior in

⁹ M. Paris, p. 667.

power and interest, would not dare to encounter. Hence the sudden revolutions, which often took place in those governments: hence the frequent victories obtained without a blow by one faction over the other: and hence it happened, that the seeming prevalence of a party was seldom a prognostic of its long continuance in power and authority.

The king, as soon as he received the pope's absolution from his oath, accompanied with menaces of excommunication against all opponents, trusting to the countenance of the church, to the support promised him by many considerable barons, and to the returning favour of the people, immediately took off the mask. After justifying his conduct by a proclamation, in which he set forth the private ambition, and the breach of trust, conspicuous in Leicester and his associates, he declared, that he had resumed the government, and was determined thenceforth to exert the royal authority for the protection of his subjects. He removed Hugh le Despenser and Nicholas de Ely, the justiciary and chancellor appointed by the barons; and put Philip Basset and Walter de Merton in their place. He substituted new sheriffs in all the counties, men of character and honour: he placed new governors in most of the castles: he changed all the officers of his household: he summoned a parliament, in which the resumption of his authority was ratified, with only five dissenting voices: and the barons, after making one

fruitless effort to take the king by surprise at Winchester, were obliged to acquiesce in those new regulations^r.

The king, in order to cut off every objection to his conduct, offered to refer all the differences between him and the earl of Leicester, to Margaret queen of France^s. The celebrated integrity of Lewis gave a mighty influence to any decision which issued from his court; and Henry probably hoped that the gallantry, on which all barons, as true knights, valued themselves, would make them ashamed not to submit to the award of that princess. Lewis merited the confidence reposed in him. By an admirable conduct, probably as political as just, he continually interposed his good offices to allay the civil discords of the English: he forwarded all healing measures, which might give security to both parties: and he still endeavoured, though in vain, to sooth by persuasion the fierce ambition of the earl of Leicester, and to convince him how much it was his duty to submit peaceably to the authority of his sovereign.

CIVIL WARS OF THE BARONS.

THAT bold and artful conspirator was nowise discouraged by the bad success of his past enterprises. The death of Richard earl of Gloucester, who was

^r M. Paris, p. 668. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 55.

^s Rymer, vol. i. p. 724.

his chief rival in power, and who, before his decease, had joined the royal party, seemed to open a new field to his violence, and to expose the throne to fresh insults and injuries. It was in vain that the king professed his intentions of observing strictly the Great Charter, even of maintaining all the regulations made by the reforming barons at Oxford or afterwards, except those which entirely annihilated the royal authority : these powerful chieftains, now obnoxious to the court, could not peaceably resign the hopes of entire independence and uncontrolled power, with which they had flattered themselves, and which they had so long enjoyed. Many of them engaged in Leicester's views ; and among the rest, Gilbert the young earl of Gloucester, who brought him a mighty accession of power, from the extensive authority possessed by that opulent family. Even Henry, son of the king of the Romans, commonly called Henry d'Allmaine, though a prince of the blood, joined the party of the barons against the king, the head of his own family. Leicester himself, who still resided in France, secretly formed the links of this great conspiracy, and planned the whole scheme of operations.

The princes of Wales, notwithstanding the great power of the monarchs, both of the Saxon and Norman line, still preserved authority in their own country. Though they had often been constrained to pay tribute to the crown of England, they were with difficulty retained in subordina-

tion, or even in peace ; and almost through every reign since the conquest, they had infested the English frontiers with such petty incursions and sudden inroads, as seldom merit to have place in a general history. The English, still content with repelling their invasions, and chasing them back into their mountains, had never pursued the advantages obtained over them, nor been able, even under their greatest and most active princes, to fix a total, or so much as a feudal subjection on the country. This advantage was reserved to the present king, the weakest and most indolent. In the year 1237, Lewellyn prince of Wales, declining in years and broken with infirmities, but still more harassed with the rebellion and undutiful behaviour of his youngest son Griffin, had recourse to the protection of Henry ; and consenting to subject his principality, which had so long maintained, or soon recovered, its independence, to vassalage under the crown of England, had purchased security and tranquillity on these dishonourable terms. His eldest son and heir, David, renewed the homage to England ; and having taken his brother prisoner, delivered him into Henry's hands, who committed him to custody in the Tower. That prince, endeavouring to make his escape, lost his life in the attempt ; and the prince of Wales, freed from the apprehensions of so dangerous a rival, paid thenceforth less regard to the English monarch, and even renewed those incursions, by which the Welsh, during so many

ages, had been accustomed to infest the English borders. Lewellyn, however, the son of Griffin, who succeeded to his uncle, had been obliged to renew the homage, which was now claimed by England as an established right ; but he was well pleased to inflame those civil discords, on which he rested his present security, and founded his hopes of future independence. He entered into a confederacy with the earl of Leicester, and collecting all the force of his principality, invaded England with an army of 30,000 men. He ravaged the lands of Roger de Mortimer, and of all the barons who adhered to the crown^t; he marched into Cheshire, and committed like depredations on prince Edward's territories ; every place where his disorderly troops appeared was laid waste with fire and sword ; and though Mortimer, a gallant and expert soldier, made stout resistance, it was found necessary that the prince himself should head the army against this invader. Edward repulsed prince Lewellyn, and obliged him to take shelter in the mountains of North Wales : but he was prevented from making farther progress against the enemy, by the disorders which soon after broke out in England.

The Welsh invasion was the appointed signal for the malcontent barons to rise in arms ; and Leicester, coming over secretly from France, collected all the forces of his party, and commenced

^t Chron. Dun. vol. i. p. 354.

an open rebellion. He seized the person of the bishop of Hereford; a prelate obnoxious to all the inferior clergy, on account of his devoted attachment to the court of Rome^u. Simon bishop of Norwich, and John Mansel, because they had published the pope's bull, absolving the king and kingdom from their oaths to observe the provisions of Oxford, were made prisoners, and exposed to the rage of the party. The king's demesnes were ravaged with unbounded fury^w; and as it was Leicester's interest to allure to his side, by the hopes of plunder, all the disorderly ruffians in England, he gave them a general licence to pillage the barons of the opposite party, and even all neutral persons. But one of the principal resources of his faction was the populace of the cities, particularly of London; and as he had, by his hypocritical pretensions to sanctity, and his zeal against Rome, engaged the monks and lower ecclesiastics in his party, his dominion over the inferior ranks of men became uncontrollable. Thomas Fitz-Richard mayor of London, a furious and licentious man, gave the countenance of authority to these disorders in the capital; and having declared war against the substantial citizens, he loosened all the bands of government, by which that turbulent city was commonly but ill restrained. On the approach of Easter, the zeal

^u Trivet, p. 211. M. West. p. 382, 392.

^w Trivet, p. 211. M. West. p. 382.

of superstition, the appetite for plunder, or what is often as prevalent with the populace as either of these motives, the pleasure of committing havoc and destruction, prompted them to attack the unhappy Jews, who were first pillaged without resistance, then massacred to the number of five hundred persons*. The Lombard bankers were next exposed to the rage of the people; and though, by taking sanctuary in the churches, they escaped with their lives, all their money and goods became a prey to the licentious multitude. Even the houses of the rich citizens, though English, were attacked by night; and way was made by sword and by fire to the pillage of their goods, and often to the destruction of their persons. The queen, who, though defended by the Tower, was terrified by the neighbourhood of such dangerous commotions, resolved to go by water to the castle of Windsor; but as she approached the bridge, the populace assembled against her: the cry ran, *drown the witch*; and besides abusing her with the most opprobrious language, and pelting her with rotten eggs and dirt, they had prepared large stones to sink her barge, when she should attempt to shoot the bridge; and she was so frightened, that she returned to the Tower†.

The violence and fury of Leicester's faction had risen to such a height in all parts of England, that the king, unable to resist their power, was

* Chron. T. Wykes, p. 59.

† Ibid. p. 57.

obliged to set on foot a treaty of peace; and to make an accommodation with the barons on the most disadvantageous terms². He agreed to confirm anew the provisions of Oxford, even those which entirely annihilated the royal authority; and the barons were again re-instated in the sovereignty of the kingdom. They restored Hugh le Despenser to the office of chief justiciary; they appointed their own creatures sheriffs in every county of England; they took possession of all the royal castles and fortresses; they even named all the officers of the king's household; and they summoned a parliament to meet at Westminster, in order to settle more fully their plan of government. They here produced a new list of twenty-four barons, to whom they proposed that the administration should be entirely committed; and they insisted that the authority of this junto should continue not only during the reign of the king, but also during that of prince Edward.

This prince, the life and soul of the royal party, had unhappily, before the king's accommodation with the barons, been taken prisoner by Leicester in a parley at Windsor³; and that misfortune, more than any other incident, had determined Henry to submit to the ignominious conditions imposed upon him. But Edward, having recovered his liberty by the treaty, employed his activity in

² Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 358. Trivet, p. 211.

³ M. Paris, p. 669. Trivet, p. 213.

defending the prerogatives of his family; and he gained a great party even among those who had at first adhered to the cause of the barons. His cousin Henry d'Allmaine, Roger Bigod earl marshal, earl Warrenne, Humphrey Bohun earl of Hereford, John lord Basset, Ralph Basset, Hamond l'Estrange, Roger Mortimer, Henry de Piercy, Robert de Brus, Roger de Leybourne, with almost all the lords marchers, as they were called, on the borders of Wales and of Scotland, the most warlike parts of the kingdom, declared in favour of the royal cause; and hostilities, which were scarcely well composed, were again renewed in every part of England. But the near balance of the parties, joined to the universal clamour of the people, obliged the king and barons to open anew the negotiations for peace; and it was agreed by both sides to submit their differences to the arbitration of the king of France^b.

REFERENCE TO THE KING OF FRANCE.

THIS virtuous prince, the only man who, in like circumstances, could safely have been intrusted with such an authority by a neighbouring nation, had never ceased to interpose his good offices between the English factions; and had even, during the short interval of peace, invited over

^b M. Paris, p. 668. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 58. W. Heming. p. 580. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 363.

to Paris both the king and the earl of Leicester, in order to accommodate the differences between them; but found, that the fears and animosities on both sides, as well as the ambition of Leicester, were so violent, as to render all his endeavours ineffectual. But when this solemn appeal, ratified by the oaths and subscriptions of the leaders in both factions, was made to his judgment, he was not discouraged from pursuing his honourable purpose: he summoned the states of France at Amiens; and there, in the presence of that assembly, as well as in that of the king of England and Peter de Montfort, Leicester's son, he brought this great cause to a trial and examination. It appeared to him, that the provisions of Oxford, even had they not been extorted by force, had they not been so exorbitant in their nature, and subversive of the ancient constitution, were expressly established as a temporary expedient, and could not, without breach of trust, be rendered perpetual by the barons. He therefore annulled these provisions; restored to the king the possession of his castles, and the power of nomination to the great offices; allowed him to retain what foreigners he pleased in his kingdom, and even to confer on them places of trust and dignity, and, in a word, re-established the royal power in the same condition on which it stood before the meeting of the parliament at Oxford. But while he thus suppressed dangerous innovations, and preserved unimpaired the prerogatives of the

English crown, he was not negligent of the rights of the people ; and besides ordering that a general amnesty should be granted for all past offences, he declared, that his award was not any wise meant to derogate from the privileges and liberties which the nation enjoyed by any former concessions or charters of the crown^c.

RENEWAL OF THE CIVIL WARS.

THIS equitable sentence was no sooner known in England, than Leicester and his confederates determined to reject it, and to have recourse to arms, in order to procure to themselves more safe and advantageous conditions^d. Without regard to his oaths and subscriptions, that enterprising conspirator directed his two sons, Richard and Peter de Montfort, in conjunction with Robert de Ferrars earl of Derby, to attack the city of Worcester; while Henry and Simon de Montfort, two others of his sons, assisted by the prince of Wales, were ordered to lay waste the estate of Roger de Mortimer. He himself resided at London; and employing as his instrument Fitz-Richard the seditious mayor, who had violently and illegally prolonged his authority, he wrought up that city to the highest ferment and agitation. The populace

^c Rymer, vol. i. p. 776, 777, &c. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 58. Knyghton, p. 2446.

^d Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 363.

formed themselves into bands and companies ; chose leaders ; practised all military exercises ; committed violence on the royalists : and to give them greater countenance in their disorders, an association was entered into between the city and eighteen great barons, never to make peace with the king but by common consent and approbation. At the head of those who swore to maintain this association, were the earls of Leicester, Gloucester, and Derby, with le Despenser the chief justiciary ; men who had all previously sworn to submit to the award of the French monarch. Their only pretence for this breach of faith was, that the latter part of Lewis's sentence was, as they affirmed, a contradiction to the former : he ratified the charter of liberties, yet annulled the provisions of Oxford ; which were only calculated, as they maintained, to preserve that charter ; and without which, in their estimation, they had no security for its observance.

The king and prince, finding a civil war inevitable, prepared themselves for defence ; and summoning their military vassals from all quarters, and being reinforced by Baliol lord of Galloway, Brus lord of Annandale, Henry Piercy, John Comin^e, and other barons of the north, they composed an army, formidable, as well from its numbers as its military prowess and experience. The first enter-

^e Rymer, vol. i. p. 772. M. West. p. 385. Ypod. Neust. p. 469.

prise of the royalists was the attack of Northampton, which was defended by Simon de Montfort, with many of the principal barons of that party: and a breach being made in the walls by Philip Basset, the place was carried by assault, and both the governor and the garrison were made prisoners. The royalists marched thence to Leicester and Nottingham; both which places having opened their gates to them, prince Edward proceeded with a detachment into the county of Derby, in order to ravage with fire and sword the lands of the earl of that name, and take revenge on him for his disloyalty. Like maxims of war prevailed with both parties throughout England; and the kingdom was thus exposed in a moment to greater devastation, from the animosities of the rival barons, than it would have suffered from many years of foreign or even domestic hostilities, conducted by more humane and more generous principles.

The earl of Leicester, master of London, and of the counties in the south-east of England, formed the siege of Rochester, which alone declared for the king in those parts, and which, besides earl Warrenne, the governor, was garrisoned by many noble and powerful barons of the royal party. The king and prince hastened from Nottingham, where they were then quartered, to the relief of the place; and on their approach, Leicester raised the siege, and retreated to London, which, being the centre of his power, he was

afraid might, in his absence, fall into the king's hands, either by force or by a correspondence with the principal citizens, who were all secretly inclined to the royal cause. Reinforced by a great body of Londoners, and having summoned his partisans from all quarters, he thought himself strong enough to hazard a general battle with the royalists, and to determine the fate of the nation in one great engagement; which, if it proved successful, must be decisive against the king, who had no retreat for his broken troops in those parts; while Leicester himself, in case of any sinister accident, could easily take shelter in the city. To give the better colouring to his cause, he previously sent a message with conditions of peace to Henry, submissive in the language, but exorbitant in the demands^f; and when the messenger returned with the lie and defiance from the king, the prince, and the king of the Romans, he sent a new message renouncing, in the name of himself and of the associated barons, all fealty and allegiance to Henry. He then marched out of the city with his army, divided into four bodies: the first commanded by his two sons Henry and Guy de Montfort, together with Humphrey de Bohun earl of Hereford, who had deserted to the barons; the second led by the earl of Gloucester, with William de Montchesney and John Fitz-John; the third, composed of Londoners, under

^f M. Paris, p. 669. W. Heming. p. 583.

the command of Nicholas de Segrave : the fourth headed by himself in person. The bishop of Chester gave a general absolution to the army, accompanied with assurances that, if any of them fell in the ensuing action, they would infallibly be received into heaven, as the reward of their suffering in so meritorious a cause.

BATTLE OF LEWES. MAY 14.

LEICESTER, who possessed great talents for war, conducted his march with such skill and secrecy, that he had well nigh surprised the royalists in their quarters at Lewes in Sussex : but the vigilance and activity of prince Edward soon repaired this negligence ; and he led out the king's army to the field in three bodies. He himself conducted the van, attended by earl Warrenne and William de Valence : the main body was commanded by the king of the Romans and his son Henry : the king himself was placed in the rear at the head of his principal nobility. Prince Edward rushed upon the Londoners, who had demanded the post of honour in leading the rebel army, but who, from their ignorance of discipline and want of experience, were ill fitted to resist the gentry and military men, of whom the prince's body was composed. They were broken in an instant ; were chased off the field ; and Edward, transported by his martial ardour, and eager to revenge the insolence of the

Londoners against his mother^g, put them to the sword for the length of four miles, without giving them any quarter, and without reflecting on the fate which in the mean time attended the rest of the army. The earl of Leicester, seeing the royalists thrown into confusion by their eagerness in the pursuit, led on his remaining troops against the bodies commanded by the two royal brothers: he defeated with great slaughter the forces headed by the king of the Romans; and that prince was obliged to yield himself prisoner to the earl of Gloucester: he penetrated to the body where the king himself was placed, threw it into disorder, pursued his advantage, chased it into the town of Lewes, and obliged Henry to surrender himself prisoner^h.

Prince Edward, returning to the field of battle from his precipitate pursuit of the Londoners, was astonished to find it covered with the dead bodies of his friends, and still more to hear, that his father and uncle were defeated and taken prisoners, and that Arundel Comyn, Brus, Hamond l'Estrange, Roger Leybourne, and many considerable barons of his party, were in the hands of the victorious enemy. Earl Warrenne, Hugh Bigod, and William de Valence, struck with despair at this event, immediately took to flight, hurried to

^g M. Paris, p. 670. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 62. W. Heming. p. 583. M. West. p. 387. Ypod. Neust. p. 469. H. Knyghton, p. 2450.

^h M. Paris, p. 670. M. West. p. 387.

Pevencey, and made their escape beyond seaⁱ: but the prince, intrepid amidst the greatest disasters, exhorted his troops to revenge the death of their friends, to relieve the royal captives, and to snatch an easy conquest from an enemy disordered by their own victory^k. He found his followers intimidated by their situation; while Leicester, afraid of a sudden and violent blow from the prince, amused him by a feigned negotiation, till he was able to recal his troops from the pursuit, and bring them into order^l. There now appeared no farther resource to the royal party; surrounded by the armies and garrisons of the enemy, destitute of forage and provisions, and deprived of their sovereign, as well as of their principal leaders, who could alone inspirit them to an obstinate resistance. The prince, therefore, was obliged to submit to Leicester's terms, which were short and severe, agreeably to the suddenness and necessity of the situation: he stipulated, that he and Henry d'Allmaine should surrender themselves prisoners as pledges in lieu of the two kings; that all other prisoners on both sides should be released^m; and, that in order to settle fully the terms of agreement, application should be made to the king of France, that he should name six Frenchmen, three prelates, and three noblemen:

ⁱ Chron. T. Wykes, p. 63.

^k W. Heming. p. 584.

^l W. Heming. p. 584.

^m M. Paris, p. 671. Knyghton, p. 2451.

these six to chuse two others of their own country: and these two to chuse one Englishman, who, in conjunction with themselves, were to be invested by both parties with full powers to make what regulations they thought proper for the settlement of the kingdom. The prince and young Henry accordingly delivered themselves into Leicester's hands, who sent them under a guard to Dover castle. Such are the terms of agreement commonly called the *Mise* of Lewes, from an obsolete French term of that meaning: for it appears, that all the gentry and nobility of England, who valued themselves on their Norman extraction, and who disdained the language of their native country, made familiar use of the French tongue, till this period, and for some time after.

Leicester had no sooner obtained this great advantage, and gotten the whole royal family in his power, than he openly violated every article of the treaty, and acted as sole master, and even tyrant of the kingdom. He still detained the king in effect a prisoner, and made use of that prince's authority to purposes the most prejudicial to his interests, and the most oppressive of his people^u. He every where disarmed the royalists, and kept all his own partizans in a military posture^o: he observed the same partial conduct in the deliverance of the captives, and even threw many of the

^u Rymer, vol. i. p. 790, 791, &c.

^o Ibid. p. 795. Brady's Appeals, No. 211, 212. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 63.

royalists into prison, besides those who were taken in the battle of Lewes : he carried the king from place to place, and obliged all the royal castles, on pretence of Henry's commands, to receive a governor and garrison of his own appointment : all the officers of the crown and of the household were named by him ; and the whole authority, as well as arms of the state, was lodged in his hands : he instituted in the counties a new kind of magistracy, endowed with new and arbitrary powers, that of conservators of the peace^p : his avarice appeared barefaced, and might induce us to question the greatness of his ambition, at least the largeness of his mind, if we had not reason to think, that he intended to employ his acquisitions as the instruments for attaining farther power and grandeur. He seized the estates of no less than eighteen barons, as his share of the spoil gained in the battle of Lewes : he engrossed to himself the ransom of all the prisoners ; and told his barons, with a wanton insolence, that it was sufficient for them, that he had saved them by that victory from the forfeitures and attainders which hung over them^q : he even treated the earl of Gloucester in the same injurious manner, and applied to his own use the ransom of the king of the Romans, who in the field of battle had yielded himself prisoner to that nobleman. Henry, his eldest son, made a monopoly of all the wool in the king-

^p Rymer, vol. i. p. 792.

^q Knyghton, p. 2451.

dom, the only valuable commodity for foreign markets which it at that time produced^r. The inhabitants of the cinque-ports, during the present dissolution of government, betook themselves to the most licentious piracy, preyed on the ships of all nations, threw the mariners into the sea, and by these practices soon banished all merchants from the English coasts and harbours. Every foreign commodity rose to an exorbitant price; and woollen cloth, which the English had not then the art of dying, was worn by them, white, and without receiving the last hand of the manufacturer. In answer to the complaints which arose on this occasion, Leicester replied, that the kingdom could well enough subsist within itself, and needed no intercourse with foreigners. And it was found, that he even combined with the pirates of the cinque-ports, and received as his share the third of their prizes^s.

No farther mention was made of the reference to the king of France, so essential an article in the agreement of Lewes; and Leicester summoned a parliament, composed altogether of his own partisans, in order to rivet, by their authority, that power which he had acquired by so much violence, and which he used with so much tyranny and injustice. An ordinance was there passed, to which the king's consent had been previously extorted, that every act of royal power should be

^r Chron. T. Wykes, p. 65.

^s Ibid.

exercised by a council of nine persons, who were to be chosen and removed by the majority of three, Leicester himself, the earl of Gloucester, and the bishop of Chichester¹. By this intricate plan of government, the sceptre was really put into Leicester's hands; as he had the entire direction of the bishop of Chichester, and thereby commanded all the resolutions of the council of three, who could appoint or discard at pleasure every member of the supreme council.

But it was impossible that things could long remain in this strange situation. It behoved Leicester either to descend with some peril into the rank of a subject, or to mount up with no less into that of a sovereign; and his ambition, unrestrained either by fear or by principle, gave too much reason to suspect him of the latter intention. Meanwhile, he was exposed to anxiety from every quarter: and felt that the smallest incident was capable of overturning that immense and ill-cemented fabric which he had reared. The queen, whom her husband had left abroad, had collected in foreign parts an army of desperate adventurers, and had assembled a great number of ships, with a view of invading the kingdom, and of bringing relief to her unfortunate family. Lewis, detesting Leicester's usurpations and perjuries, and disgusted at the English barons, who had refused to submit to his award, secretly favoured all her en-

¹Rymer, vol. i. p. 793. Brady's App. No. 213.

terprises, and was generally believed to be making preparations for the same purpose. An English army, by the pretended authority of the captive king, was assembled on the sea-coast to oppose this projected invasion^u; but Leicester owed his safety more to cross winds, which long detained and at last dispersed and ruined the queen's fleet, than to any resistance which, in their present situation, could have been expected from the English.

Leicester found himself better able to resist the spiritual thunders which were levelled against him. The pope, still adhering to the king's cause against the barons, dispatched cardinal Guido as his legate into England, with orders to excommunicate, by name, the three earls, Leicester, Gloucester, and Norfolk, and all others in general, who concurred in the oppression and captivity of their sovereign^w. Leicester menaced the legate with death, if he set foot within the kingdom; but Guido, meeting in France the bishops of Winchester, London, and Worcester, who had been sent thither on a negotiation, commanded them, under the penalty of ecclesiastical censures, to carry his bull into England, and to publish it against the barons. When the prelates arrived off the coast, they were boarded by the piratical mariners of the cinque-ports, to whom probably they

^u Brady's App. No. 216, 217. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 373. M. West. p. 315.

^w Rymer, vol. i. p. 798. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 373.

gave a hint of the cargo which they brought along with them : the bull was torn and thrown into the sea ; which furnished the artful prelates with a plausible excuse for not obeying the orders of the legate. Leicester appealed from Guido to the pope in person ; but, before the ambassadors appointed to defend his cause could reach Rome, the pope was dead ; and they found the legate himself, from whom they had appealed, seated on the papal throne, by the name of Urban IV. That daring leader was no wise dismayed with this incident ; and as he found that a great part of his popularity in England was founded on his opposition to the court of Rome, which was now become odious, he persisted with the more obstinacy in the prosecution of his measures.

That he might both increase and turn to advantage his popularity, Leicester summoned a new parliament in London, where he knew his power was uncontrollable ; and he fixed this assembly on a more democratical basis than any which had ever been summoned since the foundation of the monarchy. Besides the barons of his own party, and several ecclesiastics, who were not immediate tenants of the crown ; he ordered returns to be made of two knights from each shire, and, what is more remarkable, of deputies from the boroughs, an order of men, which in former ages, had always been regarded as too mean to enjoy a place in the national councils *. This pe-

* Rymer, vol. i. p. 802.

riod is commonly esteemed the epoch of the house of commons in England; and it is certainly the first time that historians speak of any representatives sent to parliament by the boroughs. In all the general accounts given in preceding times of those assemblies, the prelates and barons only are mentioned as the constituent members; and even in the most particular narratives delivered of parliamentary transactions, as in the trial of Thomas a Becket, where the events of each day, and almost of each hour, are carefully recorded by contemporary authors^y, there is not, throughout the whole, the least appearance of a house of commons. But though that house derived its existence from so precarious, and even so invidious, an origin as Leicester's usurpation, it soon proved, when summoned by the legal princes, one of the most useful, and, in process of time, one of the most powerful members of the national constitution; and gradually rescued the kingdom from aristocratical as well as from regal tyranny. But Leicester's policy, if we must ascribe to him so great a blessing, only forwarded by some years an institution, for which the general state of things had already prepared the nation; and it is otherwise inconceivable, that a plant, set by so inauspicious a hand, could have attained to so vigorous a growth, and have flourished in the midst of such tempests and convulsions. The feudal

^y Fitz-Stephen, Hist. Quadrip. Hoveden, &c.

system, with which the liberty, much more the power, of the commons was totally incompatible, began gradually to decline ; and both the king and the commonalty, who felt its inconveniences, contributed to favour this new power, which was more submissive than the barons to the regular authority of the crown, and at the same time afforded protection to the inferior orders of the state.

Leicester, having thus assembled a parliament of his own model, and trusting to the attachment of the populace of London, seized the opportunity of crushing his rivals among the powerful barons. Robert de Ferrars earl of Derby was accused in the king's name, seized, and committed to custody, without being brought to any legal trial^z. John Gifford, menaced with the same fate, fled from London, and took shelter in the borders of Wales. Even the earl of Gloucester, whose power and influence had so much contributed to the success of the barons, but who of late was extremely disgusted with Leicester's arbitrary conduct, found himself in danger from the prevailing authority of his ancient confederate ; and he retired from parliament^a. This known dissension gave courage to all Leicester's enemies and to the king's friends, who were now sure of protection from so potent a leader. Though Roger Mortimer, Hamond L'Es-trange, and other powerful marchers of Wales,

^z Chron. T. Wykes, p. 66. Ann. Waverl. p. 216.

^a M. Paris, p. 671. Ann. Waverl. p. 216.

had been obliged to leave the kingdom, their authority still remained over the territories subjected to their jurisdiction; and there were many others who were disposed to give disturbance to the new government. The animosities, inseparable from the feudal aristocracy, broke out with fresh violence, and threatened the kingdom with new convulsions and disorders.

The earl of Leicester, surrounded with these difficulties, embraced a measure, from which he hoped to reap some present advantages, but which proved in the end the source of all his future calamities. The active and intrepid prince Edward had languished in prison ever since the fatal battle of Lewes; and as he was extremely popular in the kingdom, there arose a general desire of seeing him again restored to liberty^b. Leicester, finding that he could with difficulty oppose the concurring wishes of the nation, stipulated with the prince, that, in return, he should order his adherents to deliver up to the barons all their castles, particularly those on the borders of Wales; and should swear neither to depart the kingdom during three years, nor introduce into it any foreign forces^c. The king took an oath to the same effect, and he also passed a charter, in which he confirmed the agreement or *Mise* of Lewes; and even permitted his subjects to rise in arms against him, if he should ever attempt to infringe it^d. So

^b Knyghton, p. 2451.

^c Ann. Waverl. p. 216.

^d Blackiston's Mag. Charta. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 378.

little care did Leicester take, though he constantly made use of the authority of this captive prince, to preserve to him any appearance of royalty or kingly prerogatives !

In consequence of this treaty, prince Edward was brought into Westminster-hall, and was declared free by the barons : but instead of really recovering his liberty, as he had vainly expected, he found that the whole transaction was a fraud on the part of Leicester ; that he himself still continued a prisoner at large, and was guarded by the emissaries of that nobleman ; and that, while the faction reaped all the benefit from the performance of his part of the treaty, care was taken that he should enjoy no advantage by it. As Gloucester, on his rupture with the barons, had retired for safety to his estates on the borders of Wales ; Leicester followed him with an army to Hereford^e, continued still to menace and negotiate ; and that he might add authority to his cause, he carried both the king and prince along with him. The earl of Gloucester here concerted with young Edward the manner of that prince's escape. He found means to convey to him a horse of extraordinary swiftness ; and appointed Roger Mortimer, who had returned into the kingdom, to be ready at hand with a small party to receive the prince, and to guard him to a place of safety. Edward pretended to take the air with

^e Chron. T. Wykes, p. 67. Ann. Waverl. p. 218. W. Heming. p. 585. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 383, 384.

some of Leicester's retinue, who were his guards; and making matches between their horses, after he thought he had tired and blown them sufficiently, he suddenly mounted Gloucester's horse, and called to his attendants, that he had long enough enjoyed the pleasure of their company, and now bid them adieu. They followed him for some time, without being able to overtake him; and the appearance of Mortimer with his company put an end to their pursuit.

The royalists, secretly prepared for this event, immediately flew to arms; and the joy of this gallant prince's deliverance, the oppressions under which the nation laboured, the expectation of a new scene of affairs, and the countenance of the earl of Gloucester, procured Edward an army which Leicester was utterly unable to withstand. This nobleman found himself in a remote quarter of the kingdom; surrounded by his enemies; barred from all communication with his friends by the Severne, whose bridges Edward had broken down; and obliged to fight the cause of his party under these multiplied disadvantages. In this extremity he wrote to his son Simon de Mountfort, to hasten from London with an army for his relief; and Simon had advanced to Kenilworth with that view, where, fancying that all Edward's force and attention were directed against his father, he lay secure and unguarded. But the prince, making a sudden and forced march, surprised him in his camp, dispersed his army, and took the earl of

Oxford and many other noblemen prisoners, almost without resistance. Leicester, ignorant of his son's fate, passed the Severne in boats during Edward's absence, and lay at Evesham, in expectation of being every hour joined by his friends from London: when the prince, who availed himself of every favourable moment, appeared in the field before him.

BATTLE OF EVESHAM AND DEATH OF LEICESTER. AUGUST 4.

EDWARD made a body of his troops advance from the road which led to Kenilworth, and ordered them to carry the banners taken from Simon's army; while he himself, making a circuit with the rest of his forces, purposed to attack the enemy on the other quarter. Leicester was long deceived by this stratagem, and took one division of Edward's army for his friends; but at last, perceiving his mistake, and observing the great superiority and excellent disposition of the royalists, he exclaimed that they had learned from him the art of war; adding, "The Lord have mercy on our souls, for I see our bodies are the prince's!" The battle immediately began, though on very unequal terms. Leicester's army, by living on the mountains of Wales without bread, which was not then much used among the inhabitants, had been extremely weakened by sickness and deser-

tion, and was soon broken by the victorious royalists ; while his Welsh allies, accustomed only to a desultory kind of war, immediately took to flight, and were pursued with great slaughter. Leicester himself, asking for quarter, was slain in the heat of the action, with his eldest son Henry, Hugh le Despenser, and about an hundred and sixty knights, and many other gentlemen of his party. The old king had been purposely placed by the rebels in the front of the battle ; and being clad in armour, and thereby not known by his friends, he received a wound, and was in danger of his life : but crying out, *I am Henry of Winchester, your king*, he was saved ; and put in a place of safety by his son, who flew to his rescue.

The violence, ingratitude, tyranny, rapacity, and treachery of the earl of Leicester, give a very bad idea of his moral character, and make us regard his death as the most fortunate event which in this conjuncture could have happened to the English nation : yet must we allow the man to have possessed great abilities, and the appearance of great virtues, who, though a stranger, could at a time when strangers were the most odious and the most universally decried, have acquired so extensive an interest in the kingdom, and have so nearly paved his way to the throne itself. His military capacity, and his political craft, were equally eminent : he possessed the talents both of governing men and conducting business : and though his ambition was boundless, it seems nei-

ther to have exceeded his courage nor his genius ; and he had the happiness of making the low populace, as well as the haughty barons, co-operate towards the success of his selfish and dangerous purposes. A prince of greater abilities and vigour than Henry might have directed the talents of this nobleman either to the exaltation of his throne, or to the good of his people : but the advantages given to Leicester, by the weak and variable administration of the king, brought on the ruin of royal authority, and produced great confusions in the kingdom, which, however, in the end preserved and extremely improved national liberty, and the constitution. His popularity, even after his death, continued so great, that though he was excommunicated by Rome, the people believed him to be a saint ; and many miracles were said to be wrought upon his tomb^f.

SETTLEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THE victory of Evesham, with the death of Leicester, proved decisive in favour of the royalists, and made an equal though an opposite impression on friends and enemies in every part of England. The king of the Romans recovered his liberty : the other prisoners of the royal party were not only freed but courted by their keepers :

^f Chron. de Mailr. p. 232.

Fitz-Richard, the seditious mayor of London, who had marked out forty of the most wealthy citizens for slaughter, immediately stopped his hand on receiving intelligence of this great event: and almost all the castles, garrisoned by the barons, hastened to make their submissions, and to open their gates to the king. The isle of Axholme alone, and that of Ely, trusting to the strength of their situation, ventured to make resistance; but were at last reduced, as well as the castle of Dover, by the valour and activity of prince Edward^g. Adam de Gourdon, a courageous baron, maintained himself during some time in the forests of Hampshire, committed depredations in the neighbourhood, and obliged the prince to lead a body of troops into that country against him. Edward attacked the camp of the rebels; and being transported by the ardour of battle, leaped over the trench with a few followers, and encountered Gourdon in single combat. The victory was long disputed between these valiant combatants; but ended at last in the prince's favour, who wounded his antagonist, threw him from his horse, and took him prisoner. He not only gave him his life; but introduced him that very night to the queen at Guildford, procured him his pardon, restored him to his estate, received him into favour, and was ever after faithfully served by him^h.

^g M. Paris, p. 676. W. Heming, p. 558.

^h M. Paris, p. 675.

A total victory of the sovereign over so extensive a rebellion commonly produces a revolution of government, and strengthens, as well as enlarges, for some time the prerogatives of the crown: yet no sacrifices of national liberty were made on this occasion; the Great Charter remained still inviolate; and the king, sensible that his own barons, by whose assistance alone he had prevailed, were no less jealous of their independence than the other party, seems thenceforth to have more carefully abstained from all those exertions of power which had afforded so plausible a pretence to the rebels. The clemency of this victory is also remarkable: no blood was shed on the scaffold: no attainders, except of the Mountfort family, were carried into execution: and though a parliament assembled at Winchester attainted all those who had borne arms against the king, easy compositions were made with them for their lands¹; and the highest sum levied on the most obnoxious offenders exceeded not five years rent of their estate. Even the earl of Derby, who again rebelled, after having been pardoned and restored to his fortune, was obliged to pay only seven years rent, and was a second time restored. The mild disposition of the king, and the prudence of the prince, tempered the insolence of victory, and gradually restored order to the several members of the state, disjointed by

¹ M. Paris, p. 675.

so long a continuance of civil wars and commotions.

The city of London, which had carried farthest the rage and animosity against the king, and which seemed determined to stand upon its defence after almost all the kingdom had submitted, was, after some interval, restored to most of its liberties and privileges; and Fitz-Richard the mayor, who had been guilty of so much illegal violence, was only punished by fine and imprisonment. The countess of Leicester, the king's sister, who had been extremely forward in all attacks on the royal family, was dismissed the kingdom, with her two sons, Simon and Guy, who proved very ungrateful for this lenity. Five years afterwards they assassinated, at Viterbo in Italy, their cousin Henry d'Allmaine, who at that very time was endeavouring to make their peace with the king; and by taking sanctuary in the church of the Franciscans, they escaped the punishment due to so great an enormity ^k.

The merits of the earl of Gloucester, after he returned to his allegiance, had been so great in restoring the prince to his liberty, and assisting him in his victories against the rebellious barons, that it was almost impossible to content him in his demands; and his youth and temerity as well as his great power tempted him, on some new disgust, to raise again the flames of rebellion in the

^k Rymer, vol. i. p. 879; vol. ii. p. 4, 5. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 94. W. Heming. p. 589. Trivet, p. 240.

kingdom. The mutinous populace of London at his instigation took to arms; and the prince was obliged to levy an army of 30,000 men, in order to suppress them. Even this second rebellion did not provoke the king to any act of cruelty; and the earl of Gloucester himself escaped with total impunity. He was only obliged to enter into a bond of 20,000 marks that he should never again be guilty of rebellion: a strange method of enforcing the laws, and a proof of the dangerous independence of the barons in those ages! These potent nobles were, from the danger of the precedent, averse to the execution of the laws of forfeiture and felony against any of their fellows; though they could not, with a good grace, refuse to concur in obliging them to fulfil any voluntary contract and engagement into which they had entered.

The prince, finding the state of the kingdom tolerably composed, was seduced by his avidity for glory, and by the prejudices of the age, as well as by the earnest solicitations of the king of France, to undertake an expedition against the infidels in the Holy Land¹; and he endeavoured previously to settle the state in such a manner as to dread no bad effects from his absence. As the formidable power and turbulent disposition of the earl of Gloucester gave him apprehensions, he insisted on carrying him along with him, in conse-

¹ M. Paris, p. 677.

quence of a vow which that nobleman had made to undertake the same voyage : in the mean time, he obliged him to resign some of his castles, and to enter into a new bond not to disturb the peace of the kingdom^m. He sailed from England with an army ; and arrived in Lewis's camp before Tunis in Africa, where he found that monarch already dead, from the intemperance of the climate and the fatigues of his enterprise. The great, if not only, weakness of this prince in his government, was the imprudent passion for crusades ; but it was his zeal chiefly that procured him from the clergy the title of St. Lewis, by which he is known in the French history ; and if that appellation had not been so extremely prostituted as to become rather a term of reproach, he seems by his uniform probity and goodness, as well as his piety, to have fully merited the title. He was succeeded by his son Philip, denominated the Hardy ; a prince of some merit, though much inferior to that of his father.

KING'S DEATH. NOVEMBER 16, 1272.

PRINCE Edward, not discouraged by this event, continued his voyage to the Holy Land, where he signalized himself by acts of valour ; revived the glory of the English name in those parts ; and

^m Chron. T. Wykes, p. 90.

struck such terror into the Saracens, that they employed an assassin to murder him, who wounded him in the arm, but perished in the attemptⁿ. Meanwhile, his absence from England was attended with many of those pernicious consequences which had been dreaded from it. The laws were not executed: the barons oppressed the common people with impunity^o: they gave shelter on their estates to bands of robbers, whom they employed in committing ravages on the estates of their enemies: the populace of London returned to their usual licentiousness: and the old king, unequal to the burthen of public affairs, called aloud for his gallant son to return^p, and to assist him in swaying that sceptre which was ready to drop from his feeble and irresolute hands. At last, overcome by the cares of government and the infirmities of age, he visibly declined, and he expired at St. Edmondsbury, in the 64th year of his age, and 56th of his reign; the longest reign that is to be met with in the English annals. His brother, the king of the Romans (for he never attained the title of emperor), died about seven months before him.

ⁿ M. Paris, p. 678, 679. W. Heming. p. 520.

^o Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p. 404.

^p Rymer, vol. i. p. 869. M. Paris, p. 678.

CHARACTER OF THE KING.

THE most obvious circumstance of Henry's character is, his incapacity for government, which rendered him as much a prisoner in the hands of his own ministers and favourites, and as little at his own disposal, as when detained a captive in the hands of his enemies. From this source, rather than from insincerity or treachery, arose his negligence in observing his promises; and he was too easily induced, for the sake of present convenience, to sacrifice the lasting advantages arising from the trust and confidence of his people. Hence too were derived his profusion to favourites, his attachment to strangers, the variable-ness of his conduct, his hasty resentments, and his sudden forgiveness and return of affection. Instead of reducing the dangerous power of his nobles, by obliging them to observe the laws towards their inferiors, and setting them the salutary example in his own government; he was seduced to imitate their conduct, and to make his arbitrary will, or rather that of his ministers, the rule of his actions. Instead of accommodating himself, by a strict frugality, to the embarrassed situation in which his revenue had been left, by the military expeditions of his uncle, the dissipations of his father, and the usurpations of the barons; he was tempted to levy money by irregular exactions, which, without enriching him-

self, impoverished, at least disgusted, his people. Of all men nature seemed least to have fitted him for being a tyrant; yet are there instances of oppression in his reign which, though derived from the precedents left him by his predecessors, had been carefully guarded against by the Great Charter, and are inconsistent with all rules of good government. And on the whole we may say, that greater abilities with his good dispositions, would have prevented him from falling into his faults; or, with worse dispositions, would have enabled him to maintain and defend them.

This prince was noted for his piety and devotion, and his regular attendance on public worship; and a saying of his on that head is much celebrated by ancient writers. He was engaged in a dispute with Lewis IX. of France, concerning the preference between sermons and masses: he maintained the superiority of the latter, and affirmed that he would rather have one hour's conversation with a friend, than hear twenty the most elaborate discourses pronounced in his praise^a.

Henry left two sons, Edward his successor, and Edmond earl of Lancaster; and two daughters, Margaret queen of Scotland, and Beatrix dutchess of Brittany. He had five other children, who died in their infancy.

^a Walsing. Edw. I. p. 43.

MISCELLANEOUS TRANSACTIONS OF THIS
REIGN.

THE following are the most remarkable laws enacted during this reign. There had been great disputes between the civil and ecclesiastical courts concerning bastardy. The common law had deemed all those to be bastards who were born before wedlock: by the canon law they were legitimate: and when any dispute of inheritance arose, it had formerly been usual for the civil courts to issue writs to the spiritual, directing them to inquire into the legitimacy of the person. The bishop always returned an answer agreeable to the canon law, though contrary to the municipal law of the kingdom. For this reason the civil courts had changed the terms of their writ; and instead of requiring the spiritual courts to make inquisition concerning the legitimacy of the person, they only proposed the simple question of fact, whether he were born before or after wedlock? The prelates complained of this practice to the parliament assembled at Merton in the twentieth of this king, and desired that the municipal law might be rendered conformable to the canon: but received from all the nobility the memorable reply, *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutare*, We will not change the laws of England^r.

^r Statute of Merton, chap. 9.

After the civil wars the parliament summoned at Marlebridge gave their approbation to most of the ordinances which had been established by the reforming barons, and which, though advantageous to the security of the people, had not received the sanction of a legal authority. Among other laws it was there enacted, that all appeals from the courts of inferior lords should be carried directly to the king's courts, without passing through the courts of the lords immediately superior^s. It was ordained that money should bear no interest during the minority of the debtor^t. This law was reasonable, as the estates of minors were always in the hands of their lords, and the debtors could not pay interest where they had no revenue. The charter of king John had granted this indulgence: it was omitted in that of Henry III. for what reason is not known; but it was renewed by the statute of Marlebridge. Most of the other articles of this statute are calculated to restrain the oppression of sheriffs, and the violence and iniquities committed in distraining cattle and other goods. Cattle and the instruments of husbandry formed at that time the chief riches of the people.

In the 35th year of this king an assize was fixed of bread, the price of which was settled, according to the different prices of corn, from one shilling a quarter, to seven shillings and six-

^s Statute of Marleb. chap. 20.

^t Ibid. chap. 16.

pence^u, money of that age. These great variations are alone a proof of bad tillage^w: yet did the prices often rise much higher than any taken notice of by the statute. The Chronicle of Dunstable tells us, that in this reign wheat was once sold for a mark, nay, for a pound a quarter; that is, three pounds of our present money^x. The same law affords us a proof of the little communication between the parts of the kingdom, from the very different prices which the same commodity bore at the same time. A brewer, says the statute, may sell two gallons of ale for a penny in cities, and three or four gallons for the same price in the country. At present such commodities, by the great consumption of the people, and the great stocks of the brewers, are rather cheapest in cities. The Chronicle abovementioned observes, that wheat one year was sold in many places for eight shillings a quarter, but never rose in Dunstable above a crown.

Though commerce was still very low, it seems rather to have increased since the Conquest; at least if we may judge of the increase of money by the price of corn. The medium between the

^u Statutes at Large, p. 6.

^w We learn from Cicero's Orations against Verres, lib. iii. cap. 84, 92, that the price of corn in Sicily was, during the prætorship of Sacerdos, five Denarii a Modus; during that of Verres, which immediately succeeded, only two Sesterces: that is, ten times lower; a presumption, or rather a proof, of the very bad state of tillage in ancient times.

^x So also Knyghton, p. 2444.

highest and lowest prices of wheat assigned by the statute is four shillings and three-pence a quarter, that is, twelve shillings and nine-pence of our present money. This is near half of the middling price in our time. Yet the middling price of cattle, so late as the reign of king Richard, we find to be above eight, near ten, times lower than the present. Is not this the true inference, from comparing these facts, that, in all uncivilized nations, cattle, which propagate of themselves, bear always a lower price than corn, which requires more art and stock to render it plentiful than those nations are possessed of? It is to be remarked, that Henry's assize of corn was copied from a preceding assize established by king John; consequently, the prices which we have here compared of corn and cattle may be looked on as contemporary; and they were drawn, not from one particular year, but from an estimation of the middling prices for a series of years. It is true, the prices, assigned by the assize of Richard, were meant as a standard for the accompts of sheriffs and escheators; and as considerable profits were allowed to these ministers, we may naturally suppose, that the common value of cattle was somewhat higher: yet still, so great a difference between the prices of corn and cattle as that of four to one, compared to the present rates, affords important reflections concerning the very different state of industry and tillage in the two periods.

Interest had in that age amounted to an enormous height, as might be expected from the barbarism of the times and men's ignorance of commerce. Instances occur of fifty per cent. paid for money^y. There is an edict of Philip Augustus near this period, limiting the Jews in France to 48 per cent^z. Such profits tempted the Jews to remain in the kingdom, notwithstanding the grievous oppressions to which, from the prevalent bigotry and rapine of the age, they were continually exposed. It is easy to imagine how precarious their state must have been under an indigent prince, somewhat restrained in his tyranny over his native subjects, but who possessed an unlimited authority over the Jews, the sole proprietors of money in the kingdom, and hated, on account of their riches, their religion, and their usury: yet will our ideas scarcely come up to the extortions which, in fact, we find to have been practised upon them. In the year 1241, 20,000 marks were exacted from them^a: two years after, money was again extorted; and one Jew alone, Aaron of York, was obliged to pay above 4000 marks^b: in 1250, Henry renewed his oppressions; and the same Aaron was condemned to pay him 30,000 marks upon an accusation of forgery^c: the high penalty imposed upon him, and

^y M. Paris, p. 586.

^z Brussel, *Traité des Fiefs*, vol. i. p. 576.

^a M. Paris, p. 372.

^b *Ibid.* 410.

^c *Ibid.* p. 525.

which, it seems, he was thought able to pay, is rather a presumption of his innocence than of his guilt. In 1255, the king demanded 8000 marks from the Jews, and threatened to hang them if they refused compliance. They now lost all patience, and desired leave to retire with their effects out of the kingdom. But the king replied: “How
“ can I remedy the oppressions you complain of?
“ I am myself a beggar. I am spoiled, I am
“ stripped of all my revenues: I owe above 200,000
“ marks; and if I had said 300,000, I should not
“ exceed the truth: I am obliged to pay my son
“ prince Edward 15,000 marks a year: I have
“ not a farthing; and I must have money, from
“ any hand, from any quarter, or by any means.” He then delivered over the Jews to the earl of Cornwall, that those whom the one brother had flayed, the other might embowel, to make use of the words of the historian^d. King John, his father, once demanded 10,000 marks from a Jew of Bristol; and on his refusal, ordered one of his teeth to be drawn every day till he should comply. The Jew lost seven teeth; and then paid the sum required of him^e. One talliage laid upon the Jews in 1243 amounted to 60,000 marks^f; a sum equal to the whole yearly revenue of the crown.

To give a better pretence for extortions, the improbable and absurd accusation, which has been

^d M. Paris, p. 606.

^e Ibid. p. 160.

^f Madox, p. 152.

at different times advanced against that nation, was revived in England, that they had crucified a child in derision of the sufferings of Christ. Eighteen of them were hanged at once for this crime^g: though it is nowise credible, that even the antipathy born them by the Christians, and the oppressions under which they laboured, would ever have pushed them to be guilty of that dangerous enormity. But it is natural to imagine, that a race, exposed to such insults and indignities, both from king and people, and who had so uncertain an enjoyment of their riches, would carry usury to the utmost extremity, and by their great profits make themselves some compensation for their continual perils.

Though these acts of violence against the Jews proceeded much from bigotry, they were still more derived from avidity and rapine. So far from desiring in that age to convert them, it was enacted by law in France, that if any Jew embraced Christianity, he forfeited all his goods, without exception, to the king or his superior lord. These plunderers were careful, lest the profits accruing from their dominion over that unhappy race should be diminished by their conversion^h.

Commerce must be in a wretched condition, where interest was so high, and where the sole

^g M. Paris, p. 613.

^h Brussel, vol. i. p. 622. Du Cange, verbo *Judei*.

proprietors of money employed it in usury only, and were exposed to such extortion and injustice. But the bad police of the country was another obstacle to improvements ; and rendered all communication dangerous, and all property precarious. 'The Chronicle of Dunstable saysⁱ, that men were never secure in their houses, and that whole villages were often plundered by bands of robbers, though no civil wars at that time prevailed in the kingdom. In 1249, some years before the insurrection of the barons, two merchants of Brabant came to the king at Winchester, and told him that they had been spoiled of all their goods by certain robbers, whom they knew, because they saw their faces every day in his court ; that like practices prevailed all over England, and travellers were continually exposed to the danger of being robbed, bound, wounded, and murdered ; that these crimes escaped with impunity, because the ministers of justice themselves were in a confederacy with the robbers ; and that they, for their part, instead of bringing matters to a fruitless trial by law, were willing, though merchants, to decide their cause with the robbers by arms and a duel. The king, provoked at these abuses, ordered a jury to be inclosed, and to try the robbers : the jury, though consisting of twelve men of property in Hampshire, were found to be also in a confederacy with the felons, and acquitted them.

ⁱ Vol. i. p. 155.

Henry, in a rage, committed the jury to prison, threatened them with severe punishment, and ordered a new jury to be inclosed, who, dreading the fate of their fellows, at last found a verdict against the criminals. Many of the king's own household were discovered to have participated in the guilt; and they said, for their excuse, that they received no wages from him, and were obliged to rob for a maintenance^k. *Knights and esquires, says the Dictum of Kenelworth, who were robbers, if they have no land, shall pay the half of their goods and find sufficient security to keep henceforth the peace of the kingdom.* Such were the manners of the times!

One can the less repine, during the prevalence of such manners, at the frauds and forgeries of the clergy; as it gives less disturbance to society, to take men's money from them with their own consent, though by deceits and lies, than to ravish it by open force and violence. During this reign the papal power was at its summit, and was even beginning insensibly to decline, by reason of the immeasurable avarice and extortions of the court of Rome, which disgusted the clergy as well as laity, in every kingdom of Europe. England itself, though sunk in the deepest abyss of ignorance and superstition, had seriously entertained thoughts of shaking off the papal yoke^l; and the Roman pontiff was obliged to think of new ex-

^k M. Paris, p. 509.

^l Ibid. p. 421.

pedients for rivetting it faster upon the Christian world. For this purpose Gregory IX. published his decretals^m; which are a collection of forgeries, favourable to the court of Rome, and consist of the supposed decrees of popes in the first centuries. But these forgeries are so gross, and confound so palpably all language, history, chronology, and antiquities; matters more stubborn than any speculative truths whatsoever; that even that church, which is not startled at the most monstrous contradictions and absurdities, has been obliged to abandon them to the critics. But in the dark period of the thirteenth century they passed for undisputed and authentic; and men, entangled in the mazes of this false literature, joined to the philosophy, equally false, of the times, had nothing wherewithal to defend themselves, but some small remains of common sense, which passed for profaneness and impiety, and the indelible regard to self-interest, which, as it was the sole motive in the priests for framing these impostures, served also, in some degree, to protect the laity against them.

Another expedient, devised by the church of Rome, in this period, for securing her power, was the institution of new religious orders, chiefly the Dominicans and Franciscans, who proceeded with all the zeal and success that attend novelties; were better qualified to gain the populace than the old

^m Trivet, p. 191.

orders, now become rich and indolent; maintained a perpetual rivalship with each other in promoting their gainful superstitions; and acquired a great dominion over the minds, and consequently over the purses of men, by pretending a desire of poverty and a contempt for riches. The quarrels which arose between these orders, lying still under the controul of the sovereign pontiff, never disturbed the peace of the church, and served only as a spur to their industry in promoting the common cause; and though the Dominicans lost some popularity by their denial of the immaculate conception, a point in which they unwarily engaged too far to be able to recede with honour, they counterbalanced this disadvantage by acquiring more solid establishments, by gaining the confidence of kings and princes, and by exercising the jurisdiction assigned them, of ultimate judges and punishers of heresy. Thus, the several orders of monks became a kind of regular troops or garrisons of the Romish church; and though the temporal interests of society, still more the cause of true piety, were hurt, by their various devices to captivate the populace, they proved the chief supports of that mighty fabric of superstition, and, till the revival of true learning, secured it from any dangerous invasion.

The trial by ordeal was abolished in this reign by order of council: a faint mark of improvement in the ageⁿ.

ⁿ Rymer, vol. i. p. 228. Spelman, p. 326.

Henry granted a charter to the town of Newcastle, in which he gave the inhabitants a licence to dig coal. This is the first mention of coal in England.

We learn from Madox^o, that this king gave at one time 100 shillings to master Henry, his poet: also the same year he orders this poet ten pounds.

It appears from Selden, that in the 47th of this reign, a hundred and fifty temporal, and fifty spiritual barons were summoned to perform the service due by their tenures^p. In the 35th of the subsequent reign, eighty-six temporal barons, twenty bishops, and forty-eight abbots, were summoned to a parliament convened at Carlisle^q.

^o Page 268.

^p Titles of Honour, part 2. chap. 3.

^q Parliamentary Hist. vol. i. p. 151.



Milton sculp.

Edward the First.



CHAP. XIII. p. 108.

The king, sensible that nothing kept alive the ideas of military valour and of ancient glory so much as the traditional poetry of the people, which, assisted by the power of music and the jollity of festivals, made deep impression on the minds of the youth, gathered together all the Welsh bards, and, from a barbarous though not absurd policy, ordered them to be put to death.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDWARD I.

Civil Administration of the King.... Conquest of Wales....
 Affairs of Scotland.... Competitors for the Crown of Scotland
 Reference to Edward.... Homage of Scotland....
 Award of Edward in Favour of Baliol.... War with France
 Digression concerning the Constitution of Parliament....
 War with Scotland.... Scotland subdued.... War with France
 Dissensions with the Clergy.... Arbitrary Measures....
 Peace with France.... Revolt of Scotland.... That Kingdom
 again subdued.... again revolts.... is again subdued....
 Robert Bruce.... Third Revolt of Scotland.... Death and
 Character of the King.... Miscellaneous Transactions of this
 Reign.

THE English were as yet so little enured to obedience under a regular government, that the death of almost every king, since the Conquest, had been attended with disorders; and the council, reflecting on the recent civil wars, and on the animosities which naturally remain after these great convulsions, had reason to apprehend dangerous consequences from the absence of the son and successor of Henry. They therefore hastened to proclaim prince Edward, to swear allegiance to him, and to summon the states of the kingdom, in order to provide for the public peace in this

important conjuncture^r. Walter Gifford archbishop of York, the earl of Cornwall, son of Richard king of the Romans, and the earl of Gloucester, were appointed guardians of the realm, and proceeded peaceably to the exercise of their authority, without either meeting with opposition from any of the people, or being disturbed with emulation and faction among themselves. The high character acquired by Edward during the late commotions, his military genius, his success in subduing the rebels, his moderation in settling the kingdom, had procured him great esteem, mixed with affection, among all orders of men; and no one could reasonably entertain hopes of making any advantage of his absence, or of raising disturbance in the nation. The earl of Gloucester himself, whose great power and turbulent spirit had excited most jealousy, was forward to give proofs of his allegiance; and the other malcontents, being destitute of a leader, were obliged to remain in submission to the government.

Prince Edward had reached Sicily in his return from the Holy Land, when he received intelligence of the death of his father; and he discovered a deep concern on the occasion. At the same time he learned the death of an infant son, John, whom his princess, Eleanor of Castile, had born him at Acre in Palestine; and as he appeared much less affected with that misfortune, the king of Sicily expressed a surprise at this

^r Rymer, vol. ii. p. 1. Walsing. p. 43. Trivet, p. 229.

difference of sentiment: but was told by Edward, that the death of a son was a loss which he might hope to repair; the death of a father was a loss irreparable^s.

Edward proceeded homeward; but as he soon learned the quiet settlement of the kingdom, he was in no hurry to take possession of the throne, but spent near a year in France, before he made his appearance in England. In his passage by Chalons in Burgundy, he was challenged by the prince of the country to a tournament which he was preparing; and as Edward excelled in those martial and dangerous exercises, the true image of war, he declined not the opportunity of acquiring honour in that great assembly of the neighbouring nobles. But the image of war was here unfortunately turned into the thing itself. Edward and his retinue were so successful in the jousts, that the French knights, provoked at their superiority, made a serious attack upon them, which was repulsed, and much blood was idly shed in the quarrel^t. This rencounter received the name of the petty battle of Chalons.

Edward went from Chalons to Paris, and did homage to Philip for the dominions which he held in France^u. He thence returned to Guienne, and settled that province, which was in some confusion. He made his journey to London through

^s Walsing. p. 44. Trivet, p. 240.

^t Walsing. p. 44. Trivet, p. 241. M. West. p. 402.

^u Walsing. p. 45.

France ; in his passage he accommodated at Montreuil a difference with Margaret countess of Flanders, heiress of that territory^w ; he was received with joyful acclamations by his people, and was solemnly crowned at Westminster by Robert archbishop of Canterbury.

CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF THE KING.

THE king immediately applied himself to the re-establishment of his kingdom, and to the correcting of those disorders which the civil commotions and the loose administration of his father had introduced into every part of government. The plan of his policy was equally generous and prudent. He considered the great barons both as the immediate rivals of the crown, and oppressors of the people ; and he purposed, by an exact distribution of justice, and a rigid execution of the laws, to give at once protection to the inferior orders of the state, and to diminish the arbitrary power of the great, on which their dangerous authority was chiefly founded. Making it a rule in his own conduct to observe, except on extraordinary occasions, the privileges secured to them by the Great Charter, he acquired a right to insist upon their observance of the same charter towards their

^w Rymer, vol. ii. p. 32, 33.

vassals and inferiors; and he made the crown be regarded by all the gentry and commonalty of the kingdom, as the fountain of justice, and the general asylum against oppression. Besides enacting several useful statutes, in a parliament which he summoned at Westminster, he took care to inspect the conduct of all his magistrates and judges, to displace such as were either negligent or corrupt, to provide them with sufficient force for the execution of justice, to extirpate all bands and confederacies of robbers, and to repress those more silent robberies which were committed either by the power of the nobles, or under the countenance of public authority. By this rigid administration, the face of the kingdom was soon changed; and order and justice took place of violence and oppression: but amidst the excellent institutions and public-spirited plans of Edward, there still appears somewhat both of the severity of his personal character, and of the prejudices of the times.

As the various kinds of malefactors, the murderers, robbers, incendiaries, ravishers, and plunderers, had become so numerous and powerful, that the ordinary ministers of justice, especially in the western counties, were afraid to execute the laws against them, the king found it necessary to provide an extraordinary remedy for the evil; and he erected a new tribunal which, however useful, would have been deemed, in times of more regular liberty, a great stretch of illegal and ar-

bitrary power. It consisted of commissioners, who were empowered to inquire into disorders and crimes of all kinds, and to inflict the proper punishments upon them. The officers, charged with this unusual commission, made their circuits throughout the counties of England most infested with this evil, and carried terror into all those parts of the kingdom. In their zeal to punish crimes, they did not sufficiently distinguish between the innocent and guilty; the smallest suspicion became a ground of accusation and trial; the slightest evidence was received against criminals; prisons were crowded with malefactors, real or pretended; severe fines were levied for small offences; and the king, though his exhausted exchequer was supplied by this expedient, found it necessary to stop the course of so great rigour; and after terrifying and dissipating, by this tribunal, the gangs of disorderly people in England, he prudently annulled the commission *, and never afterwards renewed it.

Among the various disorders to which the kingdom was subject, no one was more universally complained of than the adulteration of the coin; and as this crime required more art than the English of that age, who chiefly employed force and violence in their iniquities, were pos-

* Spelman's Gloss. in verbo *Trailbaston*. But Spelman was either mistaken in placing this commission in the fifth year of the king, or it was renewed in 1305. See Rymer, vol. ii. p. 960. Trivet, p. 338. M. West. p. 450.

sessed of, the imputation fell upon the Jews¹. Edward also seems to have indulged a strong prepossession against that nation; and this ill-judged zeal for Christianity being naturally augmented by an expedition to the Holy Land, he let loose the whole rigour of his justice against that unhappy people. Two hundred and eighty of them were hanged at once for this crime in London alone, besides those who suffered in other parts of the kingdom². The houses and lands (for the Jews had of late ventured to make purchases of that kind), as well as the goods of great multitudes, were sold and confiscated: and the king, lest it should be suspected that the riches of the sufferers were the chief part of their guilt, ordered a moiety of the money raised by these confiscations to be set apart and bestowed upon such as were willing to be converted to Christianity. But resentment was more prevalent with them than any temptation from their poverty; and very few of them could be induced by interest to embrace the religion of their persecutors. The miseries of this people did not here terminate. Though the arbitrary talliages and exactions levied upon them had yielded a constant and considerable revenue to the crown; Edward, prompted by his zeal and his rapacity, resolved some time after³ to purge the kingdom entirely of that hated race, and to seize to himself at once their whole property as the

¹ Walsing. p. 48. Heming. vol. i. p. 6.

² T. Wykes, p. 107.

³ In the year 1290.

reward of his labour^b. He left them only money sufficient to bear their charges into foreign countries, where new persecutions and extortions awaited them: but the inhabitants of the cinque ports, imitating the bigotry and avidity of their sovereign, despoiled most of them of this small pittance, and even threw many of them into the sea: a crime for which the king, who was determined to be the sole plunderer in his dominions, inflicted a capital punishment upon them. No less than fifteen thousand Jews were at this time robbed of their effects, and banished the kingdom: very few of that nation have since lived in England: and as it is impossible for a nation to subsist without lenders of money, and none will lend without a compensation, the practice of usury, as it was then called, was thenceforth exercised by the English themselves upon their fellow-citizens, or by Lombards and other foreigners. It is very much to be questioned, whether the dealings of these new usurers were equally open and unexceptionable with those of the old. By a law of Richard it was enacted, that three copies should be made of every bond given to a Jew; one to be put into the hands of a public magistrate, another into those of a man of credit, and a third to remain with the Jew himself^c. But as the canon law, seconded by the municipal, permitted no christian to take interest, all transac-

^b Walsing. p. 54. Heming. vol. i. p. 20. Trivet, p. 266.

^c Trivet, p. 128.

tions of this kind must, after the banishment of the Jews, have become more secret and clandestine; and the lender of consequence be paid both for the use of his money, and for the infamy and danger which he incurred by lending it.

The great poverty of the crown, though no excuse, was probably the cause of this egregious tyranny exercised against the Jews; but Edward also practised other more honourable means of remedying that evil. He employed a strict frugality in the management and distribution of his revenue: he engaged the parliament to vote him a fifteenth of all moveables; the pope to grant him the tenth of all ecclesiastical revenues for three years; and the merchants to consent to a perpetual imposition of half a mark on every sack of wool exported, and a mark on three hundred skins. He also issued commissions to inquire into all encroachments on the royal demesne; into the value of escheats, forfeitures, and wardships; and into the means of repairing or improving every branch of the revenue^d. The commissioners in the execution of their office began to carry matters too far against the nobility, and to question titles to estates which had been transmitted from father to son for several generations. Earl Warrenne, who had done such eminent service in the late reign, being required to show his titles, drew his sword; and subjoined that William the Bastard

^d Ann. Waverl. p. 235.

had not conquered the kingdom for himself alone: his ancestor was a joint adventurer in the enterprise; and he himself was determined to maintain what had from that period remained unquestioned in his family. The king, sensible of the danger, desisted from making farther inquiries of this nature.

CONQUEST OF WALES.

BUT the active spirit of Edward could not long remain without employment. He soon after undertook an enterprise more prudent for himself, and more advantageous to his people. Lewellyn, prince of Wales, had been deeply engaged with the Mountfort faction; had entered into all their conspiracies against the crown; had frequently fought on their side; and till the battle of Evesham, so fatal to that party, had employed every expedient to depress the royal cause, and to promote the success of the barons. In the general accommodation made with the vanquished, Lewellyn had also obtained his pardon; but as he was the most powerful, and therefore the most obnoxious vassal of the crown, he had reason to entertain anxiety about his situation, and to dread the future effects of resentment and jealousy in the English monarch. For this reason, he determined to provide for his security by maintaining a secret correspondence with his former associates;

and he even made his addresses to a daughter of the earl of Leicester, who was sent to him from beyond sea, but being intercepted in her passage near the isles of Scilly, was detained in the court of England^e. This incident increasing the mutual jealousy between Edward and Lewellyn, the latter, when required to come to England, and do homage to the new king, scrupled to put himself into the hands of an enemy, desired a safe-conduct from Edward, insisted upon having the king's son and other noblemen delivered to him as hostages, and demanded that his consort should previously be set at liberty^f. The king, having now brought the state to a full settlement, was not displeased with this occasion of exercising his authority, and subduing entirely the principality of Wales. He refused all Lewellyn's demands, except that of a safe-conduct; sent him repeated summons to perform the duty of a vassal; levied an army to reduce him to obedience; obtained a new aid of a fifteenth from parliament; and marched out with certain assurance of success against the enemy. Besides the great disproportion of force between the kingdom and the principality, the circumstances of the two states were entirely reversed; and the same intestine dissensions which had formerly weakened England, now prevailed in Wales, and had even taken place in the reigning family. David and Roderic, brothers to

^e Walsing. p. 46, 47. Heming. vol. i. p. 5. Trivet, p. 248.

^f Rymer, vol. ii. p. 68. Walsing. p. 46. Trivet, p. 247.

Lewellyn, dispossessed of their inheritance by that prince, had been obliged to have recourse to the protection of Edward, and they seconded with all their interest, which was extensive, his attempts to enslave their native country. The Welsh prince had no resource but in the inaccessible situation of his mountains, which had hitherto through many ages defended his forefathers against all attempts of the Saxon and Norman conquerors; and he retired among the hills of Snowdon, resolved to defend himself to the last extremity. But Edward, equally vigorous and cautious, entering by the north with a formidable army, pierced into the heart of the country; and having carefully explored every road before him, and secured every pass behind him, approached the Welsh army in its last retreat. He here avoided the putting to trial the valour of a nation proud of its ancient independence, and inflamed with animosity against its hereditary enemies; and he trusted to the slow but sure effects of famine for reducing that people to subjection. The rude and simple manners of the natives, as well as the mountainous situation of their country, had made them entirely neglect tillage, and trust to pasturage alone for their subsistence: a method of life which had hitherto secured them against the irregular attempts of the English, but exposed them to certain ruin, when the conquest of the country was steadily pursued, and prudently planned by Edward. Destitute of magazines, cooped up in a

narrow corner, they, as well as their cattle, suffered all the rigours of famine; and Lewellyn, without being able to strike a stroke for his independence, was at last obliged to submit at discretion, and receive the terms imposed upon him by the victor^g. He bound himself to pay to Edward 50,000 pounds, as a reparation of damages; to do homage to the crown of England; to permit all the other barons of Wales, except four near Snowdun, to swear fealty to the same crown; to relinquish the country between Cheshire and the river Conway; to settle on his brother Roderic a thousand marks a year, and on David five hundred; and to deliver ten hostages as security for his future submission^h.

Edward, on the performance of the other articles, remitted to the prince of Wales the payment of the 50,000 poundsⁱ, which were stipulated by treaty, and which it is probable the poverty of the country made it absolutely impossible for him to levy. But notwithstanding this indulgence, complaints of iniquities soon arose on the side of the vanquished: the English, insolent on their easy and bloodless victory, oppressed the inhabitants of the districts which were yielded to them: the lords marchers committed with impunity all kinds of violence on their Welsh neighbours: new and more severe terms were imposed

^g T. Wykes, p. 105.

^h Rymer, vol. ii. p. 88. Walsing. p. 7. Trivet, p. 251. T. Wykes, p. 106.

ⁱ Rymer, p. 92.

on Lewellyn himself; and Edward, when the prince attended him at Worcester, exacted a promise that he would retain no person in his principality who should be obnoxious to the English monarch^k. There were other personal insults which raised the indignation of the Welsh, and made them determine rather to encounter a force which they had already experienced to be so much superior, than to bear oppression from the haughty victors. Prince David, seized with the national spirit, made peace with his brother, and promised to concur in the defence of public liberty. The Welsh fled to arms; and Edward, not displeased with the occasion of making his conquest final and absolute, assembled all his military tenants, and advanced into Wales with an army which the inhabitants could not reasonably hope to resist. The situation of the country gave the Welsh at first some advantage over Luke de Tany, one of Edward's captains, who had passed the Menau with a detachment^l: but Lewellyn, being surprised by Mortimer, was defeated and slain in an action, and 2000 of his followers were put to the sword^m. David, who succeeded him in the principality, could never collect an army sufficient to face the English; and being chased from hill to hill, and hunted from one retreat to another, was

^k Dr. Powel's Hist. of Wales, p. 344, 345.

^l Walsing. p. 50. Heming. vol. i. p. 11. Trivet, p. 258. T. Wykes, p. 110.

^m Heming. vol. i. p. 11. Trivet, p. 257. Ann. Waverl. p. 235.

obliged to conceal himself under various disguises, and was at last betrayed in his lurking-place to the enemy. Edward sent him in chains to Shrewsbury; and bringing him to a formal trial before all the peers of England, ordered this sovereign prince to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, as a traitor, for defending by arms the liberties of his native country, together with his own hereditary authority^a. All the Welsh nobility submitted to the conqueror; the laws of England, with the sheriffs, and other ministers of justice, were established in that principality; and though it was long before national antipathies were extinguished, and a thorough union attained between the people; yet this important conquest, which it had required eight hundred years fully to effect, was at last, through the abilities of Edward, completed by the English.

The king, sensible that nothing kept alive the ideas of military valour and of ancient glory so much as the traditional poetry of the people, which, assisted by the power of music and the jollity of festivals, made deep impression on the minds of the youth, gathered all the Welsh bards, and, from a barbarous though not absurd policy, ordered them to be put to death^o.

There prevails a vulgar story, which, as it well suits the capacity of the monkish writers, is care-

^a Heming. vol. i. p. 12. Trivet, p. 259. Ann. Waverl. p. 238. T. Wykes, p. 111. M. West. p. 411.

^o Sir J. Wynne, p. 15.

fully recorded by them : that Edward, assembling the Welsh, promised to give them a prince of unexceptionable manners, a Welshman by birth, and one who could speak no other language. On their acclamations of joy, and promise of obedience, he invested in the principality his second son Edward, then an infant, who had been born at Carnarvon. The death of his eldest son Alphonso soon after made young Edward heir of the monarchy : the principality of Wales was fully annexed to the crown ; and henceforth gives a title to the eldest son of the kings of England.

The settlement of Wales appeared so complete to Edward, that in less than two years after he went abroad, in order to make peace between Alphonso king of Arragon, and Philip the Fair, who had lately succeeded his father Philip the Hardy on the throne of France^p. The difference between these two princes had arisen about the kingdom of Sicily, which the pope, after his hopes from England failed him, had bestowed on Charles, brother to St. Lewis, and which was claimed on other titles by Peter king of Arragon, father to Alphonso. Edward had powers from both princes to settle the terms of peace, and he succeeded in his endeavours ; but as the controversy nowise regards England, we shall not enter into a detail of it. He stayed abroad above three years ; and on his return found many disorders to have prevailed,

^p Rymer, vol. ii. p. 149, 150, 174.

both from open violence, and from the corruption of justice.

Thomas Chamberlain, a gentleman of some note, had assembled several of his associates at Boston in Lincolnshire, under pretence of holding a tournament, an exercise practised by the gentry only ; but in reality with a view of plundering the rich fair of Boston, and robbing the merchants. To facilitate his purpose, he privately set fire to the town ; and while the inhabitants were employed in quenching the flames, the conspirators broke into the booths, and carried off the goods. Chamberlain himself was detected and hanged ; but maintained so steadily the point of honour to his accomplices, that he could not be prevailed on, by offers or promises, to discover any of them. Many other instances of robbery and violence broke out in all parts of England ; though the singular circumstances attending this conspiracy have made it alone be particularly recorded by historians ⁹.

But the corruption of the judges, by which the fountains of justice were poisoned, seemed of still more dangerous consequence. Edward, in order to remedy this prevailing abuse, summoned a parliament, and brought the judges to a trial ; where all of them, except two who were clergymen, were convicted of this flagrant iniquity, were fined and deposed. The amount of the fines

⁹ Heming. vol. i. p. 16, 17.

levied upon them is alone a sufficient proof of their guilt ; being above one hundred thousand marks, an immense sum in those days, and sufficient to defray the charges of an expensive war between two great kingdoms. The king afterwards made all the new judges swear that they would take no bribes ; but his expedient, of deposing and fining the old ones, was the more effectual remedy.

We now come to give an account of the state of affairs in Scotland, which gave rise to the most interesting transactions of this reign, and of some of the subsequent ; though the intercourse of that kingdom with England, either in peace or war, had hitherto produced so few events of moment, that, to avoid tediousness, we have omitted many of them, and have been very concise in relating the rest. If the Scots had before this period any real history worthy of the name, except what they glean from scattered passages in the English historians, those events, however minute, yet being the only foreign transactions of the nation, might deserve a place in it.

AFFAIRS OF SCOTLAND.

THOUGH the government of Scotland had been continually exposed to those factions and convulsions which are incident to all barbarous, and to many civilized nations ; and though the suc-

cessions of their kings, the only part of their history which deserves any credit, had often been disordered by irregularities and usurpations, the true heir of the royal family had still in the end prevailed, and Alexander III. who had espoused the sister of Edward, probably inherited, after a period of about eight hundred years, and through a succession of males, the sceptre of all the Scottish princes who had governed the nation since its first establishment in the island. This prince died in 1286 by a fall from his horse at Kinghorn^r, without leaving any male issue, and without any descendant, except Margaret, born of Eric, king of Norway, and of Margaret, daughter of the Scottish monarch. This princess, commonly called the Maid of Norway, though a female, and an infant, and a foreigner, yet being the lawful heir of the kingdom, had, through her grandfather's care, been recognised successor by the states of Scotland^s; and on Alexander's death, the dispositions which had been previously made against that event, appeared so just and prudent, that no disorders, as might naturally be apprehended, ensued in the kingdom. Margaret was acknowledged queen of Scotland; five guardians, the bishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow, the earls of Fife and Buchan, and James, steward of Scotland, entered peaceably upon the administration; and the infant princess, under the protec-

^r Heming. vol. i. p. 29. Trivet, p. 267.

^s Rymer, vol. ii. p. 266.

tion of Edward her great uncle, and Eric her father, who exerted themselves on this occasion, seemed firmly seated on the throne of Scotland. The English monarch was naturally led to build mighty projects on this incident; and having lately by force of arms brought Wales under subjection, he attempted, by the marriage of Margaret with his eldest son Edward, to unite the whole island into one monarchy, and thereby to give it security both against domestic convulsions and foreign invasions. The amity which had of late prevailed between the two nations, and which, even in former times, had never been interrupted by any violent wars or injuries, facilitated extremely the execution of this project, so favourable to the happiness and grandeur of both kingdoms; and the states of Scotland readily gave their assent to the English proposals, and even agreed that their young sovereign should be educated in the court of Edward. Anxious, however, for the liberty and independency of their country, they took care to stipulate very equitable conditions, ere they entrusted themselves into the hands of so great and so ambitious a monarch. It was agreed that they should enjoy all their ancient laws, liberties, and customs; that in case young Edward and Margaret should die without issue, the crown of Scotland should revert to the next heir, and should be inherited by him free and independent; that the military tenants of the crown should never be obliged to go out of Scotland, in

order to do homage to the sovereign of the united kingdoms, nor the chapters of cathedral, collegiate, or conventual churches, in order to make elections; that the parliaments summoned for Scottish affairs should always be held within the bounds of that kingdom; and that Edward should bind himself under the penalty of 100,000 marks, payable to the pope for the use of the holy wars, to observe all these articles'. It is not easy to conceive that two nations could have treated more on a foot of equality than Scotland and England maintained during the whole course of this transaction: and though Edward gave his assent to the article concerning the future independency of the Scottish crown, with a *saving of his former rights*; this reserve gave no alarm to the nobility of Scotland, both because these rights, having hitherto been little heard of, had occasioned no disturbance, and because the Scots had so near a prospect of seeing them entirely absorbed in the rights of their sovereignty.

COMPETITION FOR THE CROWN OF SCOTLAND.

BUT this project, so happily formed, and so amicably conducted, failed of success, by the sudden death of the Norwegian princess, who expired

' Rymer, vol. ii. p. 482.

on her passage to Scotland^u, and left a very dismal prospect to the kingdom. Though disorders were for the present obviated by the authority of the regency formerly established, the succession itself of the crown was now become an object of dispute; and the regents could not expect that a controversy, which is not usually decided by reason and argument alone, would be peaceably settled by them, or even by the states of the kingdom, amidst so many powerful pretenders. The posterity of William king of Scotland, the prince taken prisoner by Henry II. being all extinct by the death of Margaret of Norway; the right to the crown devolved on the issue of David earl of Huntingdon, brother to William, whose male line being also extinct, left the succession open to the posterity of his daughters. The earl of Huntingdon had three daughters; Margaret, married to Alan lord of Galloway, Isabella, wife of Robert Brus or Bruce, lord of Annandale, and Adama, who espoused Henry lord Hastings. Margaret, the eldest of the sisters, left one daughter, Devergilda, married to John Baliol, by whom she had a son of the same name, one of the present competitors for the crown: Isabella, the second, bore a son, Robert Bruce, who was now alive, and who also insisted on his claim: Adama, the third, left a son, John Hastings, who pretended that the kingdom of Scotland, like many other inherit-

^u Heming. vol. i. p. 30. Trivet, p. 268.

ances, was divisible among the three daughters of the earl of Huntingdon, and that he, in right of his mother, had a title to a third of it. Baliol and Bruce united against Hastings, in maintaining that the kingdom was indivisible; but each of them, supported by plausible reasons, asserted the preference of his own title. Baliol was sprung from the elder branch: Bruce was one degree nearer the common stock: if the principle of representation was regarded, the former had the better claim: if propinquity was considered, the latter was entitled to the preference^w: the sentiments of men were divided: all the nobility had taken part on one side or the other: the people followed implicitly their leaders: the two claimants themselves had great power and numerous retainers in Scotland: and it is no wonder that, among a rude people, more accustomed to arms than enured to laws, a controversy of this nature, which could not be decided by any former precedent among them, and which is capable of exciting commotions in the most legal and best established governments, should threaten the state with the most fatal convulsions.

Each century had its peculiar mode in conducting business; and men, guided more by custom than by reason, follow, without enquiry, the manners which are prevalent in their own time. The practice of that age, in controversies

^w Heming, vol. i. p. 36.

between states and princes, seems to have been to chuse a foreign prince, as an equal arbiter, by whom the question was decided, and whose sentence prevented those dismal confusions and disorders, inseparable at all times from war, but which were multiplied a hundred fold, and dispersed into every corner, by the nature of the feudal governments. It was thus that the English king and barons, in the preceding reign, had endeavoured to compose their dissensions by a reference to the king of France; and the celebrated integrity of that monarch had prevented all the bad effects which might naturally have been dreaded from so perilous an expedient. It was thus that the kings of France and Arragon, and afterwards other princes, had submitted their controversies to Edward's judgment; and the remoteness of their states, the great power of the princes, and the little interest which he had on either side, had induced him to acquit himself with honour in his decisions. The parliament of Scotland, therefore, threatened with a furious civil war, and allured by the great reputation of the English monarch, as well as by the present amicable correspondence between the kingdoms, agreed in making a reference to Edward; and Fraser, bishop of St. Andrews, with other deputies, was sent to notify to him their resolution, and to claim his good offices in the present dangers to which they were exposed^{*}. His inclina-

^{*}Heming. vol. i. p. 31.

tion, they flattered themselves, led him to prevent their dissensions, and to interpose with a power which none of the competitors would dare to withstand: when this expedient was proposed by one party, the other deemed it dangerous to object to it: indifferent persons thought that the imminent perils of a civil war would thereby be prevented: and no one reflected on the ambitious character of Edward, and the almost certain ruin which must attend a small state, divided by faction, when it thus implicitly submits itself to the will of so powerful and encroaching a neighbour.

HOMAGE OF SCOTLAND.

THE temptation was too strong for the virtue of the English monarch to resist. He purposed to lay hold of the present favourable opportunity, and if not to create, at least to revive, his claim of a feudal superiority over Scotland; a claim which had hitherto lain in the deepest obscurity, and which, if ever it had been an object of attention, or had been so much as suspected, would have effectually prevented the Scottish barons from chusing him for an umpire. He well knew, that, if this pretension were once submitted to, as it seemed difficult, in the present situation of Scotland, to oppose it, the absolute sovereignty of that kingdom (which had been the case with Wales) would soon follow; and that one great

vassal, cooped up in an island with his liege lord, without resource from foreign powers, without aid from any fellow vassals, could not long maintain his dominions against the efforts of a mighty kingdom, assisted by all the cavils which the feudal law afforded his superior against him. In pursuit of this great object, very advantageous to England, perhaps in the end no less beneficial to Scotland, but extremely unjust and iniquitous in itself, Edward busied himself in searching for proofs of his pretended superiority; and instead of looking into his own archives, which, if his claim had been real, must have afforded him numerous records of the homages done by the Scottish princes, and could alone yield him any authentic testimony, he made all the monasteries be ransacked for old chronicles and histories written by Englishmen, and he collected all the passages which seemed anywise to favour his pretensions^y. Yet even in this method of proceeding, which must have discovered to himself the injustice of his claim, he was far from being fortunate. He began his proofs from the time of Edward the elder, and continued them through all the subsequent Saxon and Norman times; but produced nothing to his purpose^z. The whole amount of his authorities during the Saxon period, when stripped of the bombast and inaccurate style of the monkish historians, is, that the Scots had

^y Walsing. p. 55.

^z Rymer, vol. ii. p. 559.

sometimes been defeated by the English, had received peace on disadvantageous terms, had made submissions to the English monarch, and had even perhaps fallen into some dependence on a power which was so much superior, and which they had not at that time sufficient force to resist. His authorities from the Norman period were, if possible, still less conclusive: the historians indeed make frequent mention of homage done by the northern potentate; but no one of them says that it was done for his kingdom; and several of them declare, in express terms, that it was relative only to the fiefs which he enjoyed south of the Tweed^a; in the same manner, as the king of England himself swore fealty to the French monarch, for the fiefs which he inherited in France. And to such scandalous shifts was Edward reduced, that he quotes a passage from Hoveden^b, where it is asserted, that a Scottish king had done homage to England; but he purposely omits the latter part of the sentence, which expresses that this prince did homage for the lands which he held in England.

When William, king of Scotland, was taken prisoner in the battle of Alnwick, he was obliged, for the recovery of his liberty, to swear fealty to the victor for his crown itself. The deed was performed according to all the rites of the feudal law: the record was preserved in the English

^a Hoveden, p. 492, 662. M. Paris, p. 109. M. West, p. 256.

^b P. 662.

archives, and is mentioned by all the historians: but as it is the only one of the kind, and as historians speak of this superiority as a great acquisition gained by the fortunate arms of Henry II.^c, there can remain no doubt, that the kingdom of Scotland was, in all former periods, entirely free and independent. Its subjection continued a very few years: king Richard, desirous, before his departure for the Holy Land, to conciliate the friendship of William, renounced that homage, which, he says in express terms, had been extorted by his father; and he only retained the usual homage which had been done by the Scottish princes for the lands which they held in England.

But though this transaction rendered the independence of Scotland still more unquestionable, than if no fealty had ever been sworn to the English crown; the Scottish kings, apprized of the point aimed at by their powerful neighbours, seem for a long time to have retained some jealousy on that head, and in doing homage, to have anxiously obviated all such pretensions: when William in 1200 did homage to John at Lincoln, he was careful to insert a salvo for his royal dignity^d: when Alexander III. sent assistance to his father-in-law Henry III. during the wars of the barons, he previously procured an acknowledgment, that this aid was granted only from friendship, not from any right claimed by the English

^c Neubr. lib. ii. cap. 4. Knyghton, p. 2392.

^d Hoveden, p. 811.

monarch^e: and when the same prince was invited to assist at the coronation of this very Edward, he declined attendance, till he received a like acknowledgment*.

But as all these reasons (and stronger could not be produced) were but a feeble rampart against the power of the sword, Edward, carrying with him a great army, which was to enforce his proofs, advanced to the frontiers, and invited the Scottish parliament, and all the competitors, to attend him in the castle of Norham, a place situated on the southern banks of the Tweed, in order to determine that cause which had been referred to his arbitration. But though this deference seemed due to so great a monarch, and was no more than what his father and the English barons had, in similar circumstances, paid to Lewis IX., the king, careful not to give umbrage, and determined never to produce his claim, till it should be too late to think of opposition, sent the Scottish barons an acknowledgment, that, though at that time they passed the frontiers, this step should never be drawn into precedent, or afford the English kings a pretence for exacting a like submission in any future transaction^f. When the whole Scottish nation had thus unwarily put themselves in his power, Edward opened the conferences at Norham: he informed the parliament, by the mouth of Roger le Brabaneon, his chief justiciary,

* Rymer, vol. ii. p. 844.

* See note [B] vol. X.

^f Rymer, vol. ii. p. 539, 545. Walsing. p. 56.

that he was come thither to determine the right among the competitors to their crown; that he was determined to do strict justice to all parties; and that he was entitled to this authority, not in virtue of the reference made to him, but in quality of superior and liege lord of the kingdom^s. He then produced his proofs of this superiority, which he pretended to be unquestionable, and he required of them an acknowledgment of it; a demand which was superfluous if the fact were already known and avowed, and which plainly betrays Edward's consciousness of his lame and defective title. The Scottish parliament was astonished at so new a pretension, and answered only by their silence. But the king, in order to maintain the appearance of free and regular proceedings, desired them to remove into their own country, to deliberate upon his claim, to examine his proofs, to propose all their objections, and to inform him of their resolution: and he appointed a plain at Upsettleton, on the northern banks of the Tweed, for that purpose.

When the Scottish barons assembled in this place, though moved with indignation at the injustice of this unexpected claim, and at the fraud with which it had been conducted, they found themselves betrayed into a situation, in which it was impossible for them to make any defence for the ancient liberty and independence of their

^s Rymer, vol. ii. p. 543. See note [C] vol. X.

country. The king of England, a martial and politic prince, at the head of a powerful army, lay at a very small distance, and was only separated from them by a river fordable in many places. Though by a sudden flight some of them might themselves be able to make their escape, what hopes could they entertain of securing the kingdom against his future enterprises? Without a head, without union among themselves, attached all of them to different competitors, whose title they had rashly submitted to the decision of this foreign usurper, and who were thereby reduced to an absolute dependence upon him; they could only expect, by resistance, to entail on themselves and their posterity a more grievous and more destructive servitude. Yet, even in this desperate state of their affairs, the Scottish barons, as we learn from Walsingham^h, one of the best historians of that period, had the courage to reply, that, till they had a king, they could take no resolution on so momentous a point: the journal of king Edward says, that they made no answer at allⁱ: that is, perhaps, no *particular* answer or objection to Edward's claim: and by this solution it is possible to reconcile the journal with the historian. The king therefore, interpreting their silence as consent, addressed himself to the

^h Page 56. M. West. p. 436. It is said by Hemingford, vol. i. p. 33. that the king menaced violently the Scotch barons, and forced them to compliance, at least to silence.

ⁱ Rymer, vol. ii. p. 548.

several competitors, and previously to his pronouncing sentence, required their acknowledgment of his superiority.

It is evident from the genealogy of the royal family of Scotland, that there could only be two questions about the succession, that between Baliol and Bruce on the one hand, and lord Hastings on the other, concerning the partition of the crown; and that between Baliol and Bruce themselves concerning the preference of their respective titles, supposing the kingdom indivisible: yet there appeared on this occasion no less than nine claimants besides; John Comyn or Cummin lord of Badenoch, Florence earl of Holland, Patric Dunbar earl of March, William de Vescey, Robert de Pynkeni, Nicholas de Soules, Patric Galythly, Roger de Mandeville, Robert de Ross; not to mention the king of Norway, who claimed as heir to his daughter Margaret^k. Some of these competitors were descended from more remote branches of the royal family; others were even sprung from illegitimate children; and as none of them had the least pretence of right, it is natural to conjecture, that Edward had secretly encouraged them to appear in the list of claimants, that he might sow the more division among the Scottish nobility, make the cause appear the more intricate, and be able to chuse, among a great number, the most obsequious candidate.

^k Walsing. p. 58.

But he found them all equally obsequious on this occasion¹. Robert Bruce was the first that acknowledged Edward's right of superiority over Scotland; and he had so far foreseen the king's pretensions, that even in his petition, where he set forth his claim to the crown, he had previously applied to him as liege lord of the kingdom; a step which was not taken by any of the other competitors^m. They all, however, with seeming willingness, made a like acknowledgment when required; though Baliol, lest he should give offence to the Scottish nation, had taken care to be absent during the first days; and he was the last that recognized the king's titleⁿ. Edward next deliberated concerning the method of proceeding in the discussion of this great controversy. He gave orders, that Baliol, and such of the competitors as adhered to him, should chuse forty commissioners; Bruce and his adherents forty more: to these the king added twenty-four Englishmen: he ordered these hundred and four commissioners to examine the cause deliberately among themselves, and make their report to him^o: and he promised in the ensuing year to give his determination. Mean while he pretended that it was requisite to have all the fortresses of Scotland delivered into his hands, in order to enable him, with-

¹ Rymer, vol. ii. p. 529, 545. Walsing. p. 56. Heming. vol. i. p. 33, 34. Trivet, p. 260. M. West. p. 415.

^m Rymer, vol. ii. p. 577, 578, 579.

ⁿ Ibid. p. 546.

^o Ibid. p. 555, 556.

out opposition, to put the true heir in possession of the crown; and this exorbitant demand was complied with both by the states and by the claimants^p. The governors also of all the castles immediately resigned their command; except Umfreville earl of Angus, who refused, without a formal and particular acquittal from the parliament and the several claimants, to surrender his fortresses to so domineering an arbiter, who had given to Scotland so many just reasons of suspicion^q. Before this assembly broke up, which had fixed such a mark of dishonour on the nation, all the prelates and barons there present swore fealty to Edward; and that prince appointed commissioners to receive a like oath from all the other barons and persons of distinction in Scotland^r.

The king having finally made, as he imagined, this important acquisition, left the commissioners to sit at Berwic, and examine the titles of the several competitors who claimed the precarious crown, which Edward was willing for some time to allow the lawful heir to enjoy. He went southwards, both in order to assist at the funeral of his mother queen Eleanor, who died about this time, and to compose some differences which had arisen among the principal nobility. Gilbert earl of Gloucester, the greatest baron of the kingdom, had espoused the king's daughter; and being elated by that alliance, and still more by his own

^p Rymer, vol. ii. p. 529. Walsing. p. 56, 57.

^q Rymer, vol. ii. p. 531.

^r Ibid. p. 573.

power, which, he thought, set him above the laws, he permitted his bailiffs and vassals to commit violence on the lands of Humphry Bohun earl of Hereford, who retaliated the injury by like violence. But this was not a reign in which such illegal proceedings could pass with impunity. Edward procured a sentence against the two earls, committed them both to prison, and would not restore them to their liberty till he exacted a fine of 1000 marks from Hereford, and one of 10,000 from his son-in-law.

During this interval, the titles of John Baliol and of Robert Bruce, whose claims appeared to be the best founded among the competitors for the crown of Scotland, were the subject of general disquisition, as well as of debate among the commissioners. Edward, in order to give greater authority to his intended decision, proposed this general question both to the commissioners and to all the celebrated lawyers in Europe; Whether a person descended from the eldest sister, but farther removed by one degree, were preferable, in the succession of kingdoms, fiefs, and other indivisible inheritances, to one descended from the younger sister, but one degree nearer to the common stock? This was the true state of the case; and the principle of representation had now gained such ground every where, that a uniform answer was returned to the king in the affirmative. He therefore pronounced sentence in favour of Baliol; and when Bruce, upon this disappoint-

ment, joined afterwards lord Hastings, and claimed a third of the kingdom, which he now pretended to be divisible, Edward, though his interest seemed more to require the partition of Scotland, again pronounced sentence in favour of Baliol. That competitor, upon renewing his oath of fealty to England, was put in possession of the kingdom^s; all his fortresses were restored to him^t; and the conduct of Edward, both in the deliberate solemnity of the proceedings, and in the justice of the award, was so far unexceptionable.

Had the king entertained no other view than that of establishing his superiority over Scotland, though the iniquity of that claim was apparent, and was aggravated by the most egregious breach of trust, he might have fixed his pretensions, and have left that important acquisition to his posterity: but he immediately proceeded in such a manner, as made it evident, that, not content with this usurpation, he aimed also at the absolute sovereignty and dominion of the kingdom. Instead of gradually inuring the Scots to the yoke, and exerting his rights of superiority with moderation, he encouraged all appeals to England; required king John himself, by six different summons on trivial occasions, to come to London^u; refused him the privilege of defending his cause by a procurator; and obliged him to appear at

^s Rymer, vol. ii. p. 590, 591, 593, 600.

^t Ibid. p. 590.

^u Rymer, vol. ii. p. 603, 605, 606, 608, 615, 616.

the bar of his parliament as a private person^w. These humiliating demands were hitherto quite unknown to a king of Scotland: they are, however, the necessary consequence of vassalage by the feudal law; and as there was no preceding instance of such treatment submitted to by a prince of that country, Edward must, from that circumstance alone, had there remained any doubt, have been himself convinced that his claim was altogether an usurpation*. But his intention plainly was, to enrage Baliol by these indignities, to engage him in rebellion, and to assume the dominion of the state, as a punishment of his treason and felony. Accordingly Baliol, though a prince of a soft and gentle spirit, returned into Scotland highly provoked at this usage, and determined at all hazards to vindicate his liberty; and the war which soon after broke out between France and England gave him a favourable opportunity of executing his purpose.

WAR WITH FRANCE.

THE violence, robberies, and disorders, to which that age was so subject, were not confined to the licentious barons and their retainers at land: the sea was equally infested with piracy: the feeble execution of the laws had given license

^w Ryley's Placit. Parl. p. 152, 153.

* See note [D] vol. X.

to all orders of men: and a general appetite for rapine and revenge, supported by a false point of honour, had also infected the merchants and mariners; and it pushed them, on any provocation, to seek redress by immediate retaliation upon the aggressors. A Norman and an English vessel met off the coast near Bayonne; and both of them having occasion for water, they sent their boats to land, and the several crews came at the same time to the same spring: there ensued a quarrel for the preference: a Norman, drawing his dagger, attempted to stab an Englishman; who grappling with him, threw his adversary on the ground; and the Norman, as was pretended, falling on his own dagger, was slain^x. This scuffle between two seamen about water, soon kindled a bloody war between the two nations, and involved a great part of Europe in the quarrel. The mariners of the Norman ship carried their complaints to the French king: Philip, without inquiring into the fact, without demanding redress, bade them take revenge, and trouble him no more about the matter^y. The Normans, who had been more regular than usual in applying to the crown, needed but this hint to proceed to immediate violence. They seized an English ship in the channel; and hanging along with some dogs, several of the crew on the yard-arm, in presence of their companions,

^x Walsing. p. 58. Heming. vol. i. p. 39.

^y Walsing. p. 58.

dismissed the vessel²; and bade the mariners inform their countrymen, that vengeance was now taken for the blood of the Norman killed at Bayonne. This injury, accompanied with so general and deliberate an insult, was resented by the mariners of the cinque-ports, who, without carrying any complaint to the king, or waiting for redress, retaliated, by committing like barbarities on all French vessels without distinction. The French, provoked by their losses, preyed on the ships of all Edward's subjects, whether English or Gascon: the sea became a scene of piracy between the nations: the sovereigns, without either seconding or repressing the violence of their subjects, seemed to remain indifferent spectators: the English made private associations with the Irish and Dutch seamen; the French with the Flemish and Genoese³: and the animosities of the people on both sides became every day more violent and barbarous. A fleet of two hundred Norman vessels set sail to the south for wine and other commodities; and in their passage seized all the English ships which they met with; hanged the seamen, and seized the goods. The inhabitants of the English sea-ports, informed of this incident, fitted out a fleet of sixty sail, stronger and better manned than the others, and awaited the enemy on their return. After an obstinate battle,

² Heming, vol. i. p. 40. M. West. p. 419.

³ Heming, vol. i. p. 40.

they put them to rout, and sunk, destroyed, or took the greater part of them^b. No quarter was given; and it is pretended that the loss of the French amounted to fifteen thousand men: which is accounted for by this circumstance, that the Norman fleet was employed in transporting a considerable body of soldiers from the south.

The affair was now become too important to be any longer overlooked by the sovereigns. On Philip's sending an envoy to demand reparation and restitution, the king dispatched the bishop of London to the French court, in order to accommodate the quarrel. He first said, that the English courts of justice were open to all men; and if any Frenchman were injured, he might seek reparation by course of law^c. He next offered to adjust the matter by private arbiters, or by a personal interview with the king of France, or by a reference either to the pope or the college of cardinals, or any particular cardinals agreed on by both parties^d. The French, probably the more disgusted as they were hitherto losers in the quarrel, refused all these expedients: the vessels and the goods of merchants were confiscated on both sides: depredations were continued by the Gascons on the western coast of France, as well as by the English in the channel: Philip cited the king, as duke of Guienne, to appear in his court at

^b Walsing. p. 60. Trivet, p. 274. Chron. Dunst. vol. ii. p. 609.

^c Trivet, p. 275.

^d Ibid.

Paris, and answer for these offences: and Edward, apprehensive of danger to that province, sent John St. John, an experienced soldier, to Bourdeaux, and gave him directions to put Guienne in a posture of defence^c.

That he might, however, prevent a final rupture between the nations, the king dispatched his brother, Edmond earl of Lancaster, to Paris; and as this prince had espoused the queen of Navarre, mother to Jane queen of France, he seemed, on account of that alliance, the most proper person for finding expedients to accommodate the difference. Jane pretended to interpose with her good offices: Mary, the queen-dowager, feigned the same amicable disposition: and these two princesses told Edmond, that the circumstance the most difficult to adjust was the point of honour with Philip, who thought himself affronted by the injuries committed against him by his subvassals in Guienne: but if Edward would once consent to give him seizin and possession of that province, he would think his honour fully repaired, would engage to restore Guienne immediately, and would accept of a very easy satisfaction for all the other injuries. The king was consulted on the occasion; and as he then found himself in immediate danger of war with the Scots, which he regarded as the more important concern, this politic prince, blinded by his favourite passion for

^c Trivet, p. 276.

subduing that nation, allowed himself to be deceived by so gross an artifice^f. He sent his brother orders to sign and execute the treaty with the two queens; Philip solemnly promised to execute his part of it; and the king's citation to appear in the court of France was accordingly recalled: but the French monarch was no sooner put in possession of Guienne, than the citation was renewed; Edward was condemned for non-appearance; and Guienne, by a formal sentence, was declared to be forfeited and annexed to the crown^g.

Edward, fallen into a like snare with that which he himself had spread for the Scots, was enraged; and the more so, as he was justly ashamed of his own conduct, in being so egregiously over-reached by the court of France. Sensible of the extreme difficulties which he should encounter in the recovery of Gascony, where he had not retained a single place in his hands, he endeavoured to compensate that loss, by forming alliances with several princes, who he projected should attack France on all quarters, and make a diversion of her forces. Adolphus de Nassau, king of the Romans, entered into a treaty with him for that purpose^h; as did also Amadaeus count of Savoy, the archbishop of Cologne, the counts of Gueldre and Luxembourg, the duke of

^f Rymer, vol. ii. p. 619, 620. Walsing. p. 61. Heming. vol. i. p. 42, 43. Trivet. p. 277.

^g Rymer, vol. ii. p. 620, 622. Walsing. p. 61. Trivet, p. 278.

^h Heming. vol. i. p. 51.

Brabant and count of Barre, who had married his two daughters, Margaret and Eleanor: but these alliances were extremely burdensome to his narrow revenues, and proved in the issue entirely ineffectual. More impression was made on Guienne by an English army, which he completed by emptying the jails of many thousand thieves and robbers, who had been confined there for their crimes. So low had the profession of arms fallen, and so much had it degenerated from the estimation in which it stood during the vigour of the feudal system!

The king himself was detained in England, first by contrary windsⁱ, then by his apprehension of a Scottish invasion, and by a rebellion of the Welsh, whom he repressed and brought again under subjection^k. The army which he sent to Guienne, was commanded by his nephew, John de Bretagne earl of Richmond, and under him by St. John, Tibetot, de Vere, and other officers of reputation^l; who made themselves masters of the town of Bayonne, as well as of Bourg, Blaye, Reole, St. Severe, and other places, which straitened Bourdeaux, and cut off its communication both by sea and land. The favour which the Gascon nobility bore to the English government facilitated these conquests, and seemed to promise still greater successes; but this advantage was

ⁱ Chron. Dunst. vol. ii. p. 622.

^k Walsing. p. 62. Heming. vol. i. p. 55. Trivet, p. 282.
Chron. Dunst. vol. ii. p. 622. ^l Trivet, p. 279.

soon lost by the misconduct of some of the officers. Philip's brother, Charles de Valois, who commanded the French armies, having laid siege to Podensac, a small fortress near Reole, obliged Giffard the governor to capitulate; and the articles, though favourable to the English, left all the Gascons prisoners at discretion, of whom above fifty were hanged by Charles as rebels: a policy by which he both intimidated that people, and produced an irreparable breach between them and the English^m. That prince immediately attacked Reole, where the earl of Richmond himself commanded; and as the place seemed not tenable, the English general drew his troops to the water-side, with an intention of embarking with the greater part of the army. The enraged Gascons fell upon his rear, and at the same time opened their gates to the French, who, besides making themselves masters of the place, took many prisoners of distinction. St. Severe was more vigorously defended by Hugh de Vere, son of the earl of Oxford; but was at last obliged to capitulate. The French king, not content with these successes in Gascony, threatened England with an invasion; and, by a sudden attempt, his troops took and burnt Doverⁿ, but were obliged soon after to retire. And in order to make a greater diversion of the English force, and en-

^m Heming. vol. i. p. 49.

ⁿ Trivet, p. 284. Chron. Dunst. vol. ii. p. 642.

gaged Edward in dangerous and important wars, he formed a secret alliance with John Baliol king of Scotland; the commencement of that strict union which during so many centuries was maintained by mutual interests and necessities between the French and Scottish nations. John confirmed this alliance, by stipulating a marriage between his eldest son and the daughter of Charles de Valois°.

DIGRESSION CONCERNING THE CONSTITUTION OF PARLIAMENT.

THE expences attending these multiplied wars of Edward, and his preparations for war, joined to alterations which had insensibly taken place in the general state of affairs, obliged him to have frequent recourse to parliamentary supplies, introduced the lower orders of the state into the public councils, and laid the foundations of great and important changes in the government.

Though nothing could be worse calculated for cultivating the arts of peace, or maintaining peace itself, than the long subordination of vassalage from the king to the meanest gentleman, and the consequent slavery of the lower people; evils inseparable from the feudal system; that system was never able to fix the state in a proper

° Rymer, vol. ii. p. 680, 681, 695, 697. Henning, vol. i. p. 76. Trivet, p. 285.

warlike posture, or give it the full exertion of its power for defence, and still less for offence, against a public enemy. The military tenants, unacquainted with obedience, unexperienced in war, held a rank in the troops by their birth, not by their merits or services; composed a disorderly, and consequently a feeble army; and during the few days which they were obliged by their tenures to remain in the field, were often more formidable to their own prince than to foreign powers, against whom they were assembled. The sovereigns came gradually to disuse this cumbersome and dangerous machine, so apt to recoil upon the hand which held it; and exchanging the military service for pecuniary supplies, enlisted forces by means of a contract with particular officers (such as those the Italians denominate *Condottieri*), whom they dismissed at the end of the war^p. The barons and knights themselves often entered into these engagements with the prince; and were enabled to fill their bands, both by the authority which they possessed over their vassals and tenants, and from the great numbers of loose disorderly people, whom they found on their estates, and who willingly embraced an opportunity of gratifying their appetite for war and rapine.

Meanwhile the old Gothic fabric, being neglected, went gradually to decay. Though the

^p Cotton's Abr. p. 11.

Conqueror had divided all the lands of England into sixty thousand knights' fees, the number of these was insensibly diminished by various artifices; and the king at last found, that by putting the law in execution, he could assemble a small part only of the ancient force of the kingdom. It was an usual expedient for men who held of the king or great barons by military tenure, to transfer their land to the church, and receive it back by another tenure, called *frankalmoigne*, by which they were not bound to perform any service^q. A law was made against this practice; but the abuse had probably gone far before it was attended to, and probably was not entirely corrected by the new statute, which, like most laws of that age, we may conjecture to have been but feebly executed by the magistrate against the perpetual interest of so many individuals. The constable and mareschal, when they mustered the armies, often in a hurry, and for want of better information, received the service of a baron for fewer knights' fees than were due by him; and one precedent of this kind was held good against the king, and became ever after a reason for diminishing the service^r. The rolls of knights' fees were inaccurately kept; no care was taken to correct them before the armies were summoned into the field^s; it was then too late to think of examining records and

^q Madox's *Baronia Anglica*, p. 114.

^r *Ibid.* p. 115.

^s We hear only of one king, Henry II. who took this pains; and the record, called *Liber niger Scaccarii*, was the result of it.

charters; and the service was accepted on the footing which the vassal himself was pleased to acknowledge, after all the various subdivisions and conjunctions of property had thrown an obscurity on the nature and extent of his tenure^t. It is easy to judge of the intricacies which would attend disputes of this kind with individuals; when even the number of military fees belonging to the church, whose property was fixed and unalienable, became the subject of controversy; and we find in particular, that when the bishop of Durham was charged with seventy knights' fees for the aid levied on occasion of the marriage of Henry II.'s daughter to the duke of Saxony, the prelate acknowledged ten and disowned the other sixty^u. It is not known in what manner this difference was terminated; but had the question been concerning an armament to defend the kingdom, the bishop's service would probably have been received without opposition for ten fees; and this rate must also have fixed all his future payments. Pecuniary scutages, therefore, diminished as much as military services^w: Other me-

^t Madox, Bar. Ang. p. 116.

^u Ibid. p. 122. Hist. of Exch. p. 404.

^w In order to pay the sum of 100,000 marks, as king Richard's ransom, twenty shillings were imposed on each knight's fee. Had the fees remained on the original footing as settled by the Conqueror, this scutage would have amounted to 90,000 marks, which was nearly the sum required. But we find that other grievous taxes were imposed to complete it: a certain proof that many frauds and abuses had prevailed in the roll of knights' fees.

thods of filling the exchequer, as well as the armies, must be devised: new situations produced new laws and institutions; and the great alterations in the finances and military power of the crown, as well as in private property, were the source of equal innovations in every part of the legislature or civil government.

The exorbitant estates conferred by the Norman on his barons and chieftains, remained not long entire and unimpaired. The landed property was gradually shared out into more hands; and those immense baronies were divided, either by provisions to younger children, by partitions among co-heirs, by sale, or by escheating to the king, who gratified a great number of his courtiers, by dealing them out among them in smaller portions. Such moderate estates, as they required œconomy, and confined the proprietors to live at home, were better calculated for duration; and the order of knights and small barons grew daily more numerous, and began to form a very respectable rank or order in the state. As they were all immediate vassals of the crown by military tenure, they were, by the principles of the feudal law, equally intitled with the greatest barons to a seat in the national or general councils; and this right, though regarded as a privilege which the owners would not entirely relinquish, was also considered as a burthen, which they desired to be subjected to on extraordinary occasions only. Hence it was provided in the

charter of king John, that while the great barons were summoned to the national council by a particular writ, the small barons, under which appellation the knights were also comprehended, should only be called by a general summons of the sheriff. The distinction between great and small barons, like that between rich and poor, was not exactly defined; but agreeably to the inaccurate genius of that age, and to the simplicity of ancient government, was left very much to be determined by the discretion of the king and his ministers. It was usual for the prince to require, by a particular summons, the attendance of a baron in one parliament, and to neglect him in future parliaments^x; nor was this uncertainty ever complained of as an injury. He attended when required: he was better pleased, on other occasions, to be exempted from the burthen: and as he was acknowledged to be of the same order with the greatest barons, it gave them no surprise to see him take his seat in the great council, whether he appeared of his own accord, or by a particular summons from the king. The barons by *writ*, therefore, began gradually to intermix themselves with the barons by *tenure*; and as Camden tells us^y, from an ancient manuscript now lost, that after the battle of Evesham a positive law was enacted, prohibiting every baron

^x Chancellor West's Enquiry into the Manner of creating Peers, p. 43, 46, 47, 55.

^y In-Britann. p. 122.

from appearing in parliament who was not invited thither by a particular summons, the whole baronage of England held thenceforward their seat by writ, and this important privilege of their tenures was in effect abolished. Only where writs had been regularly continued for some time in one great family, the omission of them would have been regarded as an affront, and even as an injury.

A like alteration gradually took place in the order of earls, who were the highest rank of barons. The dignity of an earl, like that of a baron, was anciently territorial and official²: he exercised jurisdiction within his county: he levied the third of the fines to his own profit: he was at once a civil and a military magistrate: and though his authority, from the time of the Norman conquest, was hereditary in England, the title was so much connected with the office, that where the king intended to create a new earl, he had no other expedient than to erect a certain territory into a county or earldom, and to bestow it upon the person and his family³. But as the sheriffs, who were the vicegerents of the earls, were named by the king, and removeable at pleasure, he found them more dependent upon him; and endeavoured to throw the whole authority

² Spelm. Gloss. in voce *Comcs.*

³ Essays on British Antiquities. This practice, however, seems to have been more familiar in Scotland, and the kingdoms on the continent, than in England.

and jurisdiction of the office into their hands. This magistrate was at the head of the finances, and levied all the king's rents, within the county: he assessed at pleasure the talliages of the inhabitants in royal demesne: he had usually committed to him the management of wards, and often of escheats: he presided in the lower courts of judicature: and thus, though inferior to the earl in dignity, he was soon considered, by this union of the judicial and fiscal powers, and by the confidence reposed in him by the king, as much superior to him in authority, and undermined his influence within his own jurisdiction^b. It became usual, in creating an earl, to give him a fixed salary, commonly about twenty pounds a year, in lieu of his third of the fines: the diminution of his power kept pace with the retrenchment of his profit: and the dignity of earl, instead of being territorial and official, dwindled into personal and titular. Such were the mighty alterations which already had fully taken place, or were gradually advancing in the house of peers; that is, in the parliament: for there seems anciently to have been no other house.

But though the introduction of barons by writ, and of titular earls, had given some increase to royal authority, there were other causes which counterbalanced those innovations, and tended in

^b There are instances of the princes of the blood who accepted of the office of sheriff. Spelman in voce *Viccomes*.

a higher degree to diminish the power of the sovereign. The disuse into which the feudal militia had in a great measure fallen, made the barons almost entirely forget their dependence on the crown: by the diminution of the number of knight's fees, the king had no reasonable compensation when he levied scutages, and exchanged their service for money: the alienations of the crown lands had reduced him to poverty: and above all, the concession of the Great Charter had set bounds to royal power, and had rendered it more difficult and dangerous for the prince to exert any extraordinary act of arbitrary authority. In this situation, it was natural for the king to court the friendship of the lesser barons and knights, whose influence was noways dangerous to him, and who, being exposed to oppression from their powerful neighbours, sought a legal protection under the shadow of the throne. He desired, therefore, to have their presence in parliament, where they served to control the turbulent resolutions of the great. To exact a regular attendance of the whole body would have produced confusion, and would have imposed too heavy a burden upon them. To summon only a few by writ, though it was practised, and had a good effect, served not entirely the king's purpose; because these members had no farther authority than attended their personal character, and were eclipsed by the appearance of the more powerful nobility. He therefore dispensed with

the attendance of most of the lesser barons in parliament; and in return for this indulgence (for such it was then esteemed), required them to chuse in each county a certain number of their own body, whose charges they bore, and who, having gained the confidence, carried with them of course the authority, of the whole order. This expedient had been practised at different times in the reign of Henry III.^c, and regularly during that of the present king. The numbers sent up by each county varied at the will of the prince^d: they took their seat among the other peers; because by their tenure they belonged to that order^e: the introducing of them into that house scarcely appeared an innovation: and though it was easily in the king's power, by varying their number, to command the resolutions of the whole parliament, this circumstance was little attended to in an age when force was more prevalent than laws, and when a resolution, though taken by the majority of a legal assembly, could not be executed if it opposed the will of the more powerful minority.

But there were other important consequences which followed the diminution and consequent disuse of the ancient feudal militia. The king's expence in levying and maintaining a military

^c Rot. Claus. 38 Hen. III. m. 7. and 12. d.: Asalso Rot. Claus. 42 Hen. III. m. 1. d. Prynne's Pref. to Cotton's Abridgment.

^d Brady's Answer to Petyt, from the records, p. 151.

^e Brady's Treatise of Boroughs, App. N^o 13.

force for every enterprise was increased beyond what his narrow revenues were able to bear : as the scutages of his military tenants, which were accepted in lieu of their personal service, had fallen to nothing, there were no means of supply but from voluntary aids granted him by the parliament and clergy ; or from the talliages which he might levy upon the towns and inhabitants in royal demesne. In the preceding year Edward had been obliged to exact no less than the sixth of all moveables from the laity, and a moiety of all ecclesiastical benefices^f, for his expedition into Poictou, and the suppression of the Welsh : and this distressful situation, which was likely often to return upon him and his successors, made him think of a new device, and summon the representatives of all the boroughs to parliament. This period, which is the twenty-third of his reign, seems to be the real and the true epoch of the house of commons, and the faint dawn of popular government in England. For the representatives of the counties were only deputies from the smaller barons and lesser nobility : and the former precedent of the representatives from the boroughs, who were summoned by the earl of Leicester, was regarded as the act of a violent usurpation, had been discontinued in all the subsequent parliaments ; and if such a measure had

^f Brady's Treatise of Boroughs, App. N^o 13. p. 31, from the records. Heming. vol. i. p. 52. M. West. p. 422. Ryley, p. 462.

not become necessary on other accounts, that precedent was more likely to blast than give credit to it.

During the course of several years, the kings of England, in imitation of other European princes, had embraced the salutary policy of encouraging and protecting the lower and more industrious orders of the state; whom they found well disposed to obey the laws and civil magistrate, and whose ingenuity and labour furnished commodities requisite for the ornament of peace and support of war. Though the inhabitants of the country were still left at the disposal of their imperious lords; many attempts were made to give more security and liberty to citizens, and make them enjoy unmolested the fruits of their industry. Boroughs were erected by royal patent within the demesne lands: liberty of trade was conferred upon them: the inhabitants were allowed to farm at a fixed rent their own tolls and customs^g: they were permitted to elect their own magistrates: justice was administered to them by these magistrates, without obliging them to attend the sheriff or county-court: and some shadow of independence, by means of these equitable privileges, was gradually acquired by the people^h. The king, however, retained still the power of levying talliages or taxes upon them at plea-

^g Madox. *Firma Burgi*, p. 21.

^h Brady of Boroughs, App. No. 1, 2, 3.

sureⁱ; and though their poverty, and the customs of the age, made these demands neither frequent nor exorbitant, such unlimited authority in the sovereign was a sensible check upon commerce, and was utterly incompatible with all the principles of a free government. But when the multiplied necessities of the crown produced a greater avidity for supply, the king, whose prerogative entitled him to exact it, found that he had not power sufficient to enforce his edicts, and that it was necessary, before he imposed taxes, to smooth the way for his demand, and to obtain the previous consent of the boroughs, by solicitations, remonstrances, and authority. The inconvenience of transacting this business with every particular borough was soon felt; and Edward became sensible that the most expeditious way of obtaining supply was, to assemble the deputies of all the boroughs, to lay before them the necessities of the state, to discuss the matter in their presence, and to require their consent to the demands of their sovereign. For this reason he issued writs to the sheriffs, enjoining them to send to parliament, along with two knights of the shire, two deputies from each borough within their county^k,

ⁱ The king had not only the power of talliating the inhabitants within his own demesnes, but that of granting to particular barons the power of talliating the inhabitants within theirs. See Brady's Answer to Petyt, p. 118. Madox's Hist. of the Exchequer, p. 518.

^k Writs were issued to about 120 cities and boroughs.

and these provided with sufficient powers from their community to consent, in their name, to what he and his council should require of them. *As it is a most equitable rule*, says he, in his preamble to this writ, *that what concerns all should be approved of by all ; and common dangers be repelled by united efforts*¹; a noble principle, which may seem to indicate a liberal mind in the king, and which laid the foundation of a free and an equitable government.

After the election of these deputies by the aldermen and common council, they gave sureties for their attendance before the king and parliament: their charges were respectively borne by the borough which sent them; and they had so little idea of appearing as legislators, a character extremely wide of their low rank and condition^m, that no intelligence could be more disagreeable to any borough, than to find that they must elect, or to any individual than that he was elected to a trust from which no profit or honour could possibly be derivedⁿ. They composed not, properly

¹ Brady of Boroughs, p. 25, 33, from the records. The writs of the parliament immediately preceding remain; and the return of knights is there required, but not a word of the boroughs; a demonstration that this was the very year in which they commenced. In the year immediately preceding, the taxes were levied by a seeming free consent of each particular borough, beginning with London. Id. p. 31, 32, 33, from the records. Also his Answer to Petyt, p. 40, 41.

^m Reliquia Spelm. p. 64. Prynne's Pref. to Cotton's Abridg. and the Abridg. passim. ⁿ Brady of Boroughs, p. 59, 60.

speaking, any essential part of the parliament : they sat apart both from the barons and knights^o, who disdained to mix with such mean personages : after they had given their consent to the taxes required of them, their business being then finished, they separated, even though the parliament still continued to sit, and to canvass the national business^p : and as they all consisted of men who were real burgesses of the place from which they were sent, the sheriff, when he found no person of abilities or wealth sufficient for the office, often used the freedom of omitting particular boroughs in his returns ; and as he received the thanks of the people for this indulgence, he gave no displeasure to the court, who levied on all the boroughs, without distinction, the tax agreed to by the majority of deputies^q.

The union, however, of the representatives from the boroughs gave gradually more weight to

^o Brady of Boroughs, p. 37, 38, from the records, and Append. p. 19. Also his Append. to his Answer to Petyt, Record. And his Gloss. in verb. *Communitas Regn.* p. 33.

^p Ryley's Placit. Parl. p. 241, 242, &c. Cotton's Abridg. p. 14.

^q Brady of Boroughs, p. 52, from the records. There is even an instance in the reign of Edward III. when the king named all the deputies. Id. Ans. to Petyt, p. 16. If he fairly named the most considerable and creditable burgesses, little exception would be taken : as their business was not to check the king, but to reason with him, and consent to his demands. It was not till the reign of Richard II. that the sheriffs were deprived of the power of omitting boroughs at pleasure. See Stat. at Large, 5th Richard II. cap. 4.

the whole order; and it became customary for them, in return for the supplies which they granted, to prefer petitions to the crown for the redress of any particular grievance of which they found reason to complain. The more the king's demands multiplied, the faster these petitions increased both in number and authority; and the prince found it difficult to refuse men whose grants had supported his throne, and to whose assistance he might so soon be again obliged to have recourse. The commons, however, were still much below the rank of legislators*. Their petitions, though they received a verbal assent from the throne, were only the rudiments of laws: the judges were afterwards entrusted with the power of putting them into form: and the king, by adding to them the sanction of his authority, and that sometimes without the assent of the nobles, bestowed validity upon them. The age did not refine so much as to perceive the danger of these irregularities. No man was displeased that the sovereign, at the desire of any class of men, should issue an order which appeared only to concern that class; and his predecessors were so near possessing the whole legislative power, that he gave no disgust by assuming it in this seemingly inoffensive manner. But time and farther experience gradually opened men's eyes, and corrected these abuses. It was found that no laws

* See note [E] vol. X.

could be fixed for one order of men, without affecting the whole ; and that the force and efficacy of laws depended entirely on the terms employed in wording them. The house of peers, therefore, the most powerful order in the state, with reason expected that their assent should be expressly granted to all public ordinances[†] : and in the reign of Henry V. the commons required that no laws should be framed merely upon their petitions, unless the statutes were worded by themselves, and had passed their house in the form of a bill[‡].

But as the same causes which had produced a partition of property continued still to operate, the number of knights and lesser barons, or what the English call the gentry, perpetually increased, and they sunk into a rank still more inferior to the great nobility. The equality of tenure was lost in the great inferiority of power and property ; and the house of representatives from the counties was gradually separated from that of the peers, and formed a distinct order in the state[§]. The growth of commerce meanwhile augmented the

[†] In those instances found in Cotton's Abridgment, where the king appears to answer to himself the petitions of the commons, he probably exerted no more than that power which was long inherent in the crown, of regulating matters by royal edicts or proclamations. But no durable or general statute seems ever to have been made by the king from the petition of the commons alone, without the assent of the peers. It is more likely that the peers alone, without the commons, would enact statutes.

[‡] Brady's Answer to Petyt, p. 85, from the records.

[§] Cotton's Abridgment, p. 18.

private wealth and consideration of the burgesses ; the frequent demands of the crown increased their public importance ; and as they resembled the knights of shires in one material circumstance, that of representing particular bodies of men ; it no longer appeared unsuitable to unite them together in the same house, and to confound their rights and privileges*. Thus the third estate, that of the commons, reached at last its present form ; and as the country gentlemen made thenceforwards no scruple of appearing as deputies from the boroughs, the distinction between the members was entirely lost, and the lower house acquired thence a great accession of weight and importance in the kingdom. Still, however, the office of this estate was very different from that which it has since exercised with so much advantage to the public. Instead of checking and controlling the authority of the king, they were naturally induced to adhere to him as the great fountain of law and justice, and to support him against the power of the aristocracy, which at once was the source of oppression to themselves, and disturbed him in the execution of the laws. The king in his turn gave countenance to an order of men, so useful and so little dangerous : the peers also were obliged to pay them some consideration : and by this means the third estate, formerly so abject in England, as well as in all other European nations, rose by slow degrees to their present im-

* See note [F] vol. X.

portance; and in their progress made arts and commerce, the necessary attendants of liberty and equality, flourish in the kingdom*.

What sufficiently proves that the commencement of the house of burgesses, who are the true commons, was not an affair of chance, but arose from the necessities of the present situation, is, that Edward at the very same time summoned deputies from the inferior clergy, the first that ever met in England^u, and he required them to impose taxes on their constituents for the publick service. Formerly the ecclesiastical benefices bore no part of the burthens of the state: the pope indeed of late had often levied impositions upon them: he had sometimes granted this power to the sovereign^x: the king himself had in the preceding year exacted, by menaces and violence, a very grievous tax of half the revenues of the clergy: but as this precedent was dangerous, and could not easily be repeated in a government which required the consent of the subject to any extraordinary resolution, Edward found it more prudent to assemble a lower house of convocation, to lay before them his necessities, and to ask some supply. But on this occasion he met with difficulties. Whether that the clergy thought themselves the most independent body in the

* See note [G] vol. X.

^u Archbishop Wake's *State of the Church of England*, p. 235. Brady of *Boroughs*, p. 34. Gilbert's *Hist. of the Exch.* p. 46.

^x *Ann. Waverl* p. 227, 228. T. Wykes, p. 99, 120.

kingdom, or were disgusted by the former exorbitant impositions, they absolutely refused their assent to the king's demand of a fifth of their moveables; and it was not till a second meeting that, on their persisting in this refusal, he was willing to accept of a tenth. The barons and knights granted him, without hesitation, an eleventh; the burgesses a seventh. But the clergy still scrupled to meet on the king's writ, lest by such an instance of obedience they should seem to acknowledge the authority of the temporal power: and this compromise was at last fallen upon, that the king should issue his writ to the archbishop; and that the archbishop should, in consequence of it, summon the clergy, who, as they then appeared to obey their spiritual superior, no longer hesitated to meet in convocation. This expedient, however, was the cause why the ecclesiastics were separated into two houses of convocation under their several archbishops, and formed not one estate, as in other countries of Europe; which was at first the king's intention^v. We now return to the course of our narration.

Edward, conscious of the reasons of disgust which he had given to the king of Scots, informed of the dispositions of that people, and expecting the most violent effects of their resentment, which he knew he had so well merited; employed the supplies granted him by his people, in making

^v Gilbert's Hist. of Exch. p. 51, 54.

preparations against the hostilities of his northern neighbour. When in this situation, he received intelligence of the treaty secretly concluded between John and Philip; and though uneasy at this concurrence of a French and Scottish war, he resolved not to encourage his enemies by a pusillanimous behaviour, or by yielding to their united efforts. He summoned John to perform the duty of a vassal, and to send him a supply of forces against an invasion from France, with which he was then threatened: he next required that the fortresses of Berwic, Jedborough, and Roxborough should be put into his hands as a security during the war²: he cited John to appear in an English parliament to be held at Newcastle: and when none of these successive demands were complied with, he marched northward with numerous forces, 30,000 foot and 4000 horse, to chastise his rebellious vassal. The Scottish nation, who had little reliance on the vigour and abilities of their prince, assigned him a council of twelve noblemen, in whose hands the sovereignty was really lodged^a, and who put the country in the best posture of which the present distractions would admit. A great army, composed of 40,000 infantry, though supported only by 500 cavalry, advanced to the frontiers; and after a fruitless attempt upon Carlisle, marched eastwards to de-

² Rymer, vol. ii. p. 692. Walsing. p. 64. Heming. vol. i. p. 84. Trivet, p. 286.

^a Heming. vol. i. p. 75.

fend those provinces which Edward was preparing to attack. But some of the most considerable of the Scottish nobles, Robert Bruce the father and son, the earls of March and Angus, prognosticating the ruin of their country, from the concurrence of intestine divisions and a foreign invasion, endeavoured here to ingratiate themselves with Edward, by an early submission; and the king, encouraged by this favourable incident, led his army into the enemies country, and crossed the Tweed without opposition at Coldstream. He then received a message from John, by which that prince, having now procured for himself and his nation pope Celestine's dispensation from former oaths, renounced the homage which had been done to England, and set Edward at defiance^b. This bravado was but ill supported by the military operations of the Scots. Berwic was already taken by assault: sir William Douglas, the governor, was made prisoner: above 7000 of the garrison were put to the sword: and Edward, elated by this great advantage, dispatched earl Warrenne with 12,000 men, to lay siege to Dunbar, which was defended by the flower of the Scottish nobility.

The Scots, sensible of the importance of this place, which, if taken, laid their whole country open to the enemy, advanced with their main

^b Rymer, vol. ii. p. 607. Walsing. p. 66. Heming. vol. i. p. 92.

army, under the command of the earls of Buchan, Lenox, and Marre, in order to relieve it. Warrenne, not dismayed at the great superiority of their number, marched out to give them battle. He attacked them with great vigour; and as undisciplined troops, when numerous, are but the more exposed to a panic upon any alarm, he soon threw them into confusion, and chased them off the field with great slaughter. The loss of the Scots is said to have amounted to 20,000 men: the castle of Dunbar, with all its garrison, surrendered next day to Edward, who, after the battle, had brought up the main body of the English, and who now proceeded with an assured confidence of success. The castle of Roxborough was yielded by James, steward of Scotland; and that nobleman, from whom is descended the royal family of Stuart, was again obliged to swear fealty to Edward. After a feeble resistance, the castles of Edinburgh and Stirling opened their gates to the enemy. All the southern parts were instantly subdued by the English; and, to enable them the better to reduce the northern, whose inaccessible situation seemed to give them some more security, Edward sent for a strong reinforcement of Welsh and Irish, who, being accustomed to a desultory kind of war, were the best fitted to pursue the fugitive Scots into the recesses of their lakes and mountains. But the spirit of the nation was already broken by their misfortunes; and the feeble and timid Baliol, discontented with his own

subjects, and overawed by the English, abandoned all those resources which his people might yet have possessed in this extremity. He hastened to make his submissions to Edward ; he expressed the deepest penitence for his disloyalty to his liege lord ; and he made a solemn and irrevocable resignation of his crown into the hands of that monarch^c. Edward marched northwards to Aberdeen and Elgin, without meeting an enemy ; no Scotchman approached him but to pay him submission and do him homage : even the turbulent Highlanders, ever refractory to their own princes, and averse to the restraint of laws, endeavoured to prevent the devastation of their country, by giving him early proofs of obedience : and Edward, having brought the whole kingdom to a seeming state of tranquillity, returned to the south with his army. There was a stone, to which the popular superstition of the Scots paid the highest veneration : all their kings were seated on it, when they received the rite of inauguration : an ancient tradition assured them, that, wherever this stone was placed, their nation should always govern : and it was carefully preserved at Scone, as the true palladium of their monarchy, and their ultimate resource amidst all their misfortunes. Edward got possession of it ; and carried it with him to England^d. He gave

^c Rymer, vol. ii. p. 718. Walsing. p. 67. Heming. vol. i. p. 99. Trivet, p. 292.

^d Walsing. p. 69. Trivet, p. 299.

orders to destroy the records, and all those monuments of antiquity, which might preserve the memory of the independence of the kingdom, and refute the English claims of superiority. The Scots pretend, that he also destroyed all the annals preserved in their convents: but it is not probable, that a nation, so rude and unpolished, should be possessed of any history which deserves much to be regretted. The great seal of Baliol was broken; and that prince himself was carried prisoner to London, and committed to custody in the Tower. Two years after, he was restored to liberty, and submitted to a voluntary banishment in France; where, without making any farther attempts for the recovery of his royalty, he died in a private station. Earl Warrenne was left governor of Scotland^e: Englishmen were entrusted with the chief offices: and Edward, flattering himself that he had attained the end of all his wishes, and that the numerous acts of fraud and violence, which he had practised against Scotland, had terminated in the final reduction of that kingdom, returned with his victorious army into England.

WAR WITH FRANCE.

AN attempt, which he made about the same time, for the recovery of Guienne, was not equally suc-

^e Rymer, vol. ii. p. 726. Trivet, p. 295.

cessful. He sent thither an army of 7000 men, under the command of his brother the earl of Lancaster. That prince gained at first some advantages over the French at Bourdeaux; but he was soon after seized with a distemper, of which he died at Bayonne. The command devolved on the earl of Lincoln, who was not able to perform any thing considerable during the rest of the campaign^f.

But the active and ambitious spirit of Edward, while his conquests brought such considerable accessions to the English monarchy, could not be satisfied, so long as Guienne, the ancient patrimony of his family, was wrested from him by the dishonest artifices of the French monarch. Finding that the distance of that province rendered all his efforts against it feeble and uncertain, he purposed to attack France in a quarter where she appeared more vulnerable; and with this view he married his daughter Elizabeth to John earl of Holland, and at the same time contracted an alliance with Guy earl of Flanders, stipulated to pay him the sum of 75,000 pounds, and projected an invasion, with their united forces, upon Philip, their common enemy^g. He hoped that, when he himself, at the head of the English, Flemish, and Dutch armies, reinforced by his German allies, to whom he had promised or remitted con-

^f Heming. vol. i. p. 72, 73, 74.

^g Rymer, vol. ii. p. 76. Walsing. p. 68.

siderable sums, should enter the frontiers of France, and threaten the capital itself, Philip would at last be obliged to relinquish his acquisitions, and purchase peace by the restitution of Guienne. But, in order to set this great machine in movement, considerable supplies were requisite from the parliament; and Edward, without much difficulty, obtained from the barons and knights a new grant of a twelfth of all their moveables, and from the boroughs, that of an eighth. The great and almost unlimited power of the king over the latter, enabled him to throw the heavier part of the burthen on them; and the prejudices which he seems always to have entertained against the church, on account of the former zeal of the clergy for the Mountfort faction, made him resolve to load them with still more considerable impositions; and he required of them a fifth of their moveables. But he here met with an opposition, which for some time disconcerted all his measures, and engaged him in enterprises that were somewhat dangerous to *him*; and would have proved fatal to any of his predecessors.

DISSENSIONS WITH THE CLERGY.

BONIFACE VIII. who had succeeded Celestine in the papal throne, was a man of the most lofty and enterprising spirit; and, though not endowed with that severity of manners which commonly

accompanies ambition in men of his order, he was determined to carry the authority of the tiara, and his dominion over the temporal power, to as great a height as it had ever attained in any former period. Sensible that his immediate predecessors, by oppressing the church in every province of Christendom, had extremely alienated the affections of the clergy, and had afforded the civil magistrate a pretence for laying like impositions on ecclesiastical revenues, he attempted to resume the former station of the sovereign pontiff, and to establish himself as the common protector of the spiritual order against all invaders. For this purpose, he issued very early in his pontificate a general bull, prohibiting all princes from levying, without his consent, any taxes upon the clergy, and all clergymen from submitting to such impositions; and he threatened both of them with the penalties of excommunication in case of disobedience^h. This important edict is said to have been procured by the solicitation of Robert de Winchelsey, archbishop of Canterbury, who intended to employ it as a rampart against the violent extortions which the church had felt from Edward, and the still greater, which that prince's multiplied necessities gave them reason to apprehend. When a demand, therefore, was made on the clergy of a fifth of their moveables, a tax which was probably much more grievous than

^h Rymer, vol. ii. p. 706. Heming. vol. i. p. 104.

a fifth of their revenue, as their lands were mostly stocked with their cattle, and cultivated by their villains ; the clergy took shelter under the bull of pope Boniface, and pleaded conscience in refusing complianceⁱ. The king came not immediately to extremities on this repulse ; but, after locking up all their granaries and barns, and prohibiting all rent to be paid them, he appointed a new synod, to confer with him upon his demand. The primate, not dismayed by these proofs of Edward's resolution, here plainly told him, that the clergy owed obedience to two sovereigns, their spiritual and their temporal ; but their duty bound them to a much stricter attachment to the former than to the latter : they could not comply with his commands (for such, in some measure, the requests of the crown were then deemed), in contradiction to the express prohibition of the sovereign pontiff^k.

The clergy had seen, in many instances, that Edward paid little regard to those numerous privileges, on which they set so high a value. He had formerly seized, in an arbitrary manner, all the money and plate belonging to the churches and convents, and had applied them to the publick service^l ; and they could not but expect more

ⁱ Heming. vol. i. p. 107. Trivet, p. 296. Chron. Dunst. vol. ii. p. 652.

^k Heming. vol. i. p. 107.

^l Walsing. p. 65. Heming. vol. i. p. 51.

violent treatment on this sharp refusal, grounded on such dangerous principles. Instead of applying to the pope for a relaxation of his bull, he resolved immediately to employ the power in his hands; and he told the ecclesiastics, that, since they refused to support the civil government, they were unworthy to receive any benefit from it; and he would accordingly put them out of the protection of the laws. This vigorous measure was immediately carried into execution^m. Orders were issued to the judges to receive no cause brought before them by the clergy; to hear and decide all causes in which they were defendants: to do every man justice against them; to do them justice against no bodyⁿ. The ecclesiastics soon found themselves in the most miserable situation imaginable. They could not remain in their own houses or convents for want of subsistence: if they went abroad in quest of maintenance, they were dismounted, robbed of their horses and clothes, abused by every ruffian, and no redress could be obtained by them for the most violent injury. The primate himself was attacked on the highway, was stripped of his equipage and furniture, and was at last reduced to board himself, with a single servant, in the house of a country clergyman^o. The king, meanwhile, remained an indifferent spectator of all these violences; and,

^m Walsing. p. 69. Heming. vol. i. p. 107.

ⁿ M. West. p. 429.

^o Heming. vol. i. p. 109.

without employing his officers in committing any immediate injury on the priests, which might have appeared invidious and oppressive, he took ample vengeance on them for their obstinate refusal of his demands. Though the archbishop issued a general sentence of excommunication against all who attacked the persons or property of ecclesiastics, it was not regarded: while Edward enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing the people become the voluntary instruments of his justice against them, and enure themselves to throw off that respect for the sacred order, by which they had so long been overawed and governed.

The spirits of the clergy were at last broken by this harsh treatment. Besides that the whole province of York, which lay nearest the danger that still hung over them from the Scots, voluntarily, from the first, voted a fifth of their moveables; the bishops of Salisbury, Ely, and some others, made a composition for the secular clergy within their dioceses; and they agreed not to pay the fifth, which would have been an act of disobedience to Boniface's bull, but to deposit a sum equivalent in some church appointed them; whence it was taken by the king's officers^p. Many particular convents and clergymen made payment of a like sum, and received the king's protection^q. Those who had not ready money,

^p Heming. vol. i. p. 108, 109. Chron. Dunst. p. 653.

^q Chron. Dunst. vol. ii. p. 654.

entered into recognizances for the payment. And there was scarcely found one ecclesiastic in the kingdom, who seemed willing to suffer, for the sake of religious privileges, this new species of martyrdom, the most tedious and languishing of any, the most mortifying to spiritual pride, and not rewarded by that crown of glory, which the church holds up, with such ostentation, to her devoted adherents.

ARBITRARY MEASURES.

BUT as the money granted by parliament, though considerable, was not sufficient to supply the king's necessities, and that levied by compositions with the clergy came in slowly, Edward was obliged, for the obtaining of farther supply, to exert his arbitrary power, and to lay an oppressive hand on all orders of men in the kingdom. He limited the merchants in the quantity of wool allowed to be exported; and at the same time forced them to pay him a duty of forty shillings a sack, which was computed to be above the third of the value^r. He seized all the rest of the wool, as well as all the leather of the kingdom, into his hands, and disposed of these commodities for his own benefit^s. He required the sheriffs of each

^r Walsing. p. 69. Trivet, p. 296.

^s Heming. vol. i. p. 52, 110.

county to supply him with 2000 quarters of wheat, and as many of oats, which he permitted them to seize wherever they could find them: the cattle and other commodities necessary for supplying his army were laid hold of without the consent of the owners¹. And though he promised to pay afterwards the equivalent of all these goods, men saw but little probability that a prince, who submitted so little to the limitations of law, could ever, amidst his multiplied necessities, be reduced to a strict observance of his engagements. He showed, at the same time, an equal disregard to the principles of the feudal law, by which all the lands of his kingdom were held: in order to increase his army, and enable him to support that great effort which he intended to make against France, he required the attendance of every proprietor of land possessed of twenty pounds a year, even though he held not of the crown, and was not obliged by his tenure to perform any such service².

These acts of violence and of arbitrary power, notwithstanding the great personal regard generally borne to the king, bred murmurs in every order of men; and it was not long ere some of the great nobility, jealous of their own privileges as well as of national liberty, gave countenance and authority to these complaints: Edward assembled on the sea-coast an army, which

¹ Heming. vol. i. p. 111.

² Walsing. p. 69.

he purposed to send over to Gascony, while he himself should in person make an impression on the side of Flanders; and he intended to put these forces under the command of Humphrey Bohun earl of Hereford, the constable, and Roger Bigod earl of Norfolk, the mareschal of England. But these two powerful earls refused to execute his commands, and affirmed, that they were only obliged by their office to attend his person in the wars. A violent altercation ensued; and the king, in the height of his passion, addressing himself to the constable, exclaimed, *Sir earl, by God, you shall either go or hang. By God, Sir king,* replied Hereford, *I will neither go nor hang*^w. And he immediately departed, with the mareschal, and above thirty other considerable barons.

Upon this opposition, the king laid aside the project of an expedition against Guienne; and assembled the forces which he himself purposed to transport into Flanders. But the two earls, irritated in the contest and elated by impunity, pretending that none of their ancestors had ever served in that country, refused to perform the duty of their office in mustering the army^s. The king, now finding it adviseable to proceed with moderation, instead of attainting the earls, who possessed their dignities by hereditary right, ap-

^w Heming. vol. i. p. 112.

^s Rymer, vol. ii. p. 783. Walsing. p. 70.

pointed Thomas de Berkeley, and Geoffrey de Geyneville, to act, in that emergence, as constable and mareschal^y. He endeavoured to reconcile himself with the church; took the primate again into favour^z; made him, in conjunction with Reginald de Grey, tutor to the prince, whom he intended to appoint guardian of the kingdom during his absence; and he even assembled a great number of the nobility in Westminster-hall, to whom he deigned to make an apology for his past conduct. He pleaded the urgent necessities of the crown; his extreme want of money; his engagements from honour as well as interest to support his foreign allies: and he promised, if ever he returned in safety, to redress all their grievances, to restore the execution of the laws, and to make all his subjects compensation for the losses which they had sustained. Meanwhile, he begged them to suspend their animosities; to judge of him by his future conduct, of which, he hoped, he should be more master; to remain faithful to his government, or, if he perished in the present war, to preserve their allegiance to his son and successor^a.

There were certainly, from the concurrence of discontents among the great, and grievances of the people, materials sufficient in any other period to have kindled a civil war in England: but the

^y M. West. p. 430.

^z Heming. vol. i. p. 113.

^a Heming. vol. i. p. 114. M. West. p. 430.

vigour and abilities of Edward kept every one in awe; and his dexterity, in stopping on the brink of danger, and retracting the measures to which he had been pushed, by his violent temper and arbitrary principles, saved the nation from so great a calamity. The two great earls dared not to break out into open violence: they proceeded no farther than framing a remonstrance, which was delivered to the king at Winchelsea, when he was ready to embark for Flanders. They there complained of the violations of the Great Charter and that of forests; the violent seizures of corn, leather, cattle, and above all, of wool, a commodity which they affirmed to be equal in value to half the lands of the kingdom; the arbitrary imposition of forty shillings a sack on the small quantity of wool allowed to be exported by the merchants; and they claimed an immediate redress of all these grievances^b. The king told them, that the greater parts of his council were now at a distance, and without their advice he could not deliberate on measures of so great importance^c.

DISSENSIONS WITH THE BARONS.

BUT the constable and mareschal, with the barons of their party, resolved to take advantage of Ed-

^b Walsing. p. 72. Heming. vol. i. p. 115. Trivet, p. 302.

^c Walsing. p. 72. Heming. vol. i. p. 117. Trivet, p. 304.

ward's absence, and to obtain an explicit assent to their demands. When summoned to attend the parliament at London, they came with a great body of cavalry and infantry; and before they would enter the city, required that the gates should be put into their custody^d. The primate, who secretly favoured all their pretensions, advised the council to comply; and thus they became masters both of the young prince and of the resolutions of parliament. Their demands, however, were moderate; and such as sufficiently justify the purity of their intentions in all their past measures: they only required, that the two charters should receive a solemn confirmation; that a clause should be added to secure the nation for ever against all impositions and taxes without consent of parliament; and that they themselves and their adherents, who had refused to attend the king into Flanders, should be pardoned for the offence, and should be again received into favour^e. The prince of Wales and his council assented to these terms; and the charters were sent over to the king in Flanders to be there confirmed by him. Edward felt the utmost reluctance to this measure, which, he apprehended, would for the future impose fetters on his conduct, and set limits to his lawless authority. On various pretences he delayed three days giving any answer

^d Heming. vol. i. p. 138.

^e Walsing. p. 73. Heming. vol. i. p. 138, 139, 140, 141, Trivet. p. 308.

to the deputies; and when the pernicious consequences of his refusal were represented to him, he was at last obliged, after many internal struggles, to affix his seal to the charters, as also to the clause that bereaved him of the power, which he had hitherto assumed, of imposing arbitrary taxes upon the people^f.

That we may finish at once this interesting transaction concerning the settlement of the charters, we shall briefly mention the subsequent events which relate to it. The constable and mareschal, informed of the king's compliance, were satisfied; and not only ceased from disturbing the government, but assisted the regency with their power against the Scots, who had risen in arms, and had thrown off the yoke of England^g. But being sensible, that the smallest pretence would suffice to make Edward retract these detested laws, which, though they had often received the sanction both of king and parliament, and had been acknowledged during three reigns, were never yet deemed to have sufficient validity; they insisted that he should again confirm them on his return to England, and should thereby renounce all plea which he might derive from his residing in a foreign country when he formerly affixed his seal to them^h. It appeared that they judged aright of Edward's character and inten-

^f Walsing. p. 74. Heming. vol. i. p. 143.

^g Heming. vol. i. p. 143.

^h Ibid. p. 159.

tions: he delayed his confirmation as long as possible; and when the fear of worse consequences obliged him again to comply, he expressly added a salvo for his royal dignity or prerogative, which in effect enervated the whole force of the chartersⁱ. The two earls and their adherents left the parliament in disgust; and the king was constrained, on a future occasion, to grant to the people, without any subterfuge, a pure and absolute confirmation of those laws^k, which were so much the object of their passionate affection. Even farther securities were then provided for the establishment of national privileges. Three knights were appointed to be chosen in each county, and were invested with the power of punishing, by fine and imprisonment, every transgression or violation of the charters^l: a precaution, which, though it was soon disused, as encroaching too much on royal prerogative, proves the attachment which the English, in that age, bore to liberty, and their well-grounded jealousy of the arbitrary disposition of Edward.

The work, however, was not yet entirely finished and complete. In order to execute the lesser charter, it was requisite, by new perambulations, to set bounds to the royal forests, and to disafforest all land which former encroachments had comprehended within their limits. Edward

ⁱ Heming. vol. i. p. 167, 168.

^k Ibid. p. 168.

^l Ibid. p. 170.

discovered the same reluctance to comply with this equitable demand; and it was not till after many delays on his part, and many solicitations and requests, and even menaces of war and violence^m, on the part of the barons, that the perambulations were made, and exact boundaries fixed, by a jury in each county, to the extent of his forestsⁿ. Had not his ambitious and active temper raised him so many foreign enemies, and obliged him to have recourse so often to the assistance of his subjects, it is not likely that those concessions could ever have been extorted from him.

But while the people, after so many successful struggles, deemed themselves happy in the secure possession of their privileges, they were surprised in 1305 to find that Edward had secretly applied to Rome, and had procured from that mercenary court, an absolution from all the oaths and engagements, which he had so often reiterated, to observe both the charters. There are some historians^o so credulous as to imagine, that this perilous step was taken by him for no other purpose than to acquire the merit of granting a new confirmation

^m Walsing. p. 80. We are told by Tyrrel, vol. ii. p. 145, from the chronicle of St. Albans, that the barons, not content with the execution of the charter of forests, demanded of Edward as high terms as had been imposed on his father by the earl of Leicester: but no other historian mentions this particular.

ⁿ Heming. vol. i. p. 171. M. West. p. 431, 433.

^o Brady, vol. ii. p. 84. Carte, vol. ii. p. 292.

of the charters, as he did soon after; and a confirmation so much the more unquestionable, as it could never after be invalidated by his successors, on pretence of any force or violence which had been imposed upon him. But besides that this might have been done with a better grace, if he had never applied for any such absolution, the whole tenor of his conduct proves him to be little susceptible of such refinements in patriotism; and this very deed itself, in which he anew confirmed the charters, carries on the face of it a very opposite presumption. Though he ratified the charters in general, he still took advantage of the papal bull so far as to invalidate the late perambulations of the forests, which had been made with such care and attention, and to reserve to himself the power, in case of favourable incidents, to extend as much as formerly those arbitrary jurisdictions. If the power was not in fact made use of, we can only conclude that the favourable incidents did not offer.

Thus, after the contests of near a whole century, and these ever accompanied with violent jealousies, often with public convulsions, the Great Charter was finally established; and the English nation have the honour of extorting, by their perseverance, this concession from the ablest, the most warlike, and the most ambitious of all their princes^p. It is computed, that above thirty

^p It must, however, be remarked, that the king never forgave the chief actors in this transaction; and he found means after-

confirmations of the charter were at different times required of several kings, and granted by them, in full parliament; a precaution which, while it discovers some ignorance of the true nature of law and government, proves a laudable jealousy of national privileges in the people, and an extreme anxiety lest contrary precedents should ever be pleaded as an authority for infringing them. Accordingly we find, that, though arbitrary practices often prevailed, and were even able to establish themselves into settled customs, the validity of the Great Charter was never afterwards formally disputed; and that grant was still regarded as the basis of English government, and the sure rule by which the authority of every custom was to be tried and canvassed. The jurisdiction of the Star-chamber, martial law, imprisonment by warrants from the privy-council, and other practices of a like nature, though established for several centuries, were scarcely ever allowed by the English to be parts of their constitution: the affection of the nation for liberty still prevailed over all precedent, and even all political reasoning: the exercise of these powers, after being long the source of secret murmurs among the people, was, in fulness of time, solemnly

wards to oblige both the constable and mareschal to resign their offices into his hands. The former received a new grant of it: But the office of mareschal was given to Thomas of Brotherton, the king's second son.

abolished as illegal, at least as oppressive, by the whole legislative authority.

To return to the period from which this account of the charters has led us : though the king's impatience to appear at the head of his armies in Flanders made him overlook all considerations, either of domestic discontents or of commotions among the Scots ; his embarkation had been so long retarded by the various obstructions thrown in his way, that he lost the proper season for action, and after his arrival made no progress against the enemy. The king of France, taking advantage of his absence, had broken into the Low Countries ; had defeated the Flemings in the battle of Furnes ; had made himself master of Lisle, St. Omer, Courtrai, and Ypres ; and seemed in a situation to take full vengeance on the earl of Flanders, his rebellious vassal. But Edward, seconded by an English army of 50,000 men (for this is the number assigned by historians⁹), was able to stop the career of his victories ; and Philip, finding all the weak resources of his kingdom already exhausted, began to dread a reverse of fortune, and to apprehend an invasion on France itself. The king of England on the other hand, disappointed of assistance from Adolph king of the Romans, which he had purchased at a very high price, and finding many urgent calls for his presence in England, was

⁹ Heming. vol. i. p. 146.

desirous of ending, on any honourable terms, a war which served only to divert his force from the execution of more important projects. This disposition in both monarchs soon produced a cessation of hostilities for two years; and engaged them to submit their differences to the arbitration of pope Boniface.

Boniface was among the last of the sovereign pontiffs that exercised an authority over the temporal jurisdiction of princes; and these exorbitant pretensions, which he had been tempted to assume from the successful example of his predecessors, but of which the season was now past, involved him in so many calamities, and were attended with so unfortunate a catastrophe, that they have been secretly abandoned, though never openly relinquished, by his successors in the apostolic chair. Edward and Philip, equally jealous of papal claims, took care to insert in their reference, that Boniface was made judge of the difference by their consent, as a private person, not by any right of his pontificate; and the pope, without seeming to be offended at this mortifying clause, proceeded to give a sentence between them, in which they both acquiesced^r. He brought them to agree that their union should be cemented by a double marriage; that of Edward himself, who was now a widower, with Margaret, Philip's sister,

^r Rymer, vol. ii. p. 817. Heming, vol. i. p. 149. Trivet, p. 310.

and that of the prince of Wales with Isabella, daughter of that monarch^{*}. Philip was likewise willing to restore Guienne to the English, which he had indeed no good pretence to detain; but he insisted that the Scots, and their king John Baliol, should, as his allies, be comprehended in the treaty, and should be restored to their liberty. Their difference, after several disputes, was compromised, by their making mutual sacrifices to each other. Edward agreed to abandon his ally the earl of Flanders, on condition that Philip should treat in like manner his ally the king of Scots. The prospect of conquering these two countries, whose situation made them so commodious an acquisition to the respective kingdoms, prevailed over all other considerations; and though they were both finally disappointed in their hopes, their conduct was very reconcileable to the principles of an interested policy. This was the first specimen which the Scots had of the French alliance, and which was exactly conformable to what a smaller power must always expect, when it blindly attaches itself to the will and fortunes of a greater. That unhappy people, now engaged in a brave though unequal contest for their liberties, were totally abandoned by the ally in whom they reposed their final confidence, to the will of an imperious conqueror.

^{*} Rymer, vol. ii. p. 823.

REVOLT OF SCOTLAND.

THOUGH England as well as other European countries was, in its ancient state, very ill qualified for making, and still worse for maintaining, conquests, Scotland was so much inferior in its internal force, and was so ill situated for receiving foreign succours, that it is no wonder Edward, an ambitious monarch, should have cast his eye on so tempting an acquisition, which brought both security and greatness to his native country. But the instruments whom he employed to maintain his dominion over the northern kingdom were not happily chosen; and acted not with the requisite prudence and moderation in reconciling the Scottish nation to a yoke which they bore with such extreme reluctance. Warrenne, retiring into England on account of his bad state of health, left the administration entirely in the hands of Ormesby, who was appointed justiciary of Scotland, and Cressingham, who bore the office of treasurer; and a small military force remained to secure the precarious authority of those ministers. The latter had no other object than the amassing of money by rapine and injustice: the former distinguished himself by the rigour and severity of his temper: and both of them treating the Scots as a conquered people, made them sensible too early of the grievous servitude into which they had fallen. As Edward required

that all the proprietors of land should swear fealty to him, every one who refused or delayed giving this testimony of submission, was outlawed and imprisoned, and punished without mercy; and the bravest and most generous spirits of the nation were thus exasperated to the highest degree against the English government^t.

There was one William Wallace, of a small fortune, but descended of an ancient family in the west of Scotland, whose courage prompted him to undertake, and enabled him finally to accomplish, the desperate attempt of delivering his native country from the dominion of foreigners. This man, whose valorous exploits are the object of just admiration, but have been much exaggerated by the traditions of his countrymen, had been provoked by the insolence of an English officer to put him to death; and finding himself obnoxious on that account to the severity of the administration, he fled into the woods, and offered himself as a leader to all those whom their crimes, or bad fortune, or avowed hatred of the English, had reduced to a like necessity. He was endowed with gigantic force of body, with heroic courage of mind, with disinterested magnanimity, with incredible patience, and ability to bear hunger, fatigue, and all the severities of the seasons; and he soon acquired among those desperate fugitives that authority to which his virtues so justly en-

^t Walsing. p. 70. Heming. vol. i. p. 118. Trivet, p. 299.

titled him. Beginning with small attempts, in which he was always successful, he gradually proceeded to more momentous enterprises; and he discovered equal caution in securing his followers, and valour in annoying the enemy. By his knowledge of the country he was enabled, when pursued, to ensure a retreat among the morasses, or forests, or mountains; and again collecting his dispersed associates, he unexpectedly appeared in another quarter, and surprised, and routed, and put to the sword the unwary English. Every day brought accounts of his great actions, which were received with no less favour by his countrymen than terror by the enemy: all those who thirsted after military fame were desirous to partake of his renown: his successful valour seemed to vindicate the nation from the ignominy into which it had fallen, by its tame submission to the English: and though no nobleman of note ventured as yet to join his party, he had gained a general confidence and attachment, which birth and fortune are not alone able to confer.

Wallace having, by many fortunate enterprises, brought the valour of his followers to correspond to his own, resolved to strike a decisive blow against the English government; and he concerted the plan of attacking Ormesby at Scone, and of taking vengeance on him for all the violence and tyranny of which he had been guilty. The justiciary, apprised of his intentions, fled hastily into England: all the other officers of

that nation imitated his example: their terror added alacrity and courage to the Scots, who took themselves to arms in every quarter: many of the principal barons, and among the rest sir William Douglas^u, openly countenanced Wallace's party: Robert Bruce secretly favoured and promoted the same cause: and the Scots, shaking off their fetters, prepared themselves to defend, by an united effort, that liberty which they had so unexpectedly recovered from the hands of their oppressors.

But Warrenne, collecting an army of 40,000 men in the north of England, determined to re-establish his authority; and he endeavoured, by the celerity of his armament and of his march, to compensate for his past negligence, which had enabled the Scots to throw off the English government. He suddenly entered Annandale, and came up with the enemy at Irvine, before their forces were fully collected, and before they had put themselves in a posture of defence. Many of the Scottish nobles, alarmed with their dangerous situation, here submitted to the English, renewed their oaths of fealty, promised to deliver hostages for their good behaviour, and received a pardon for past offences^w. Others who had not yet declared themselves, such as the steward of Scotland and the earl of Lenox, joined, though

^u Walsing. p. 70. Heming. vol. i. p. 118.

^w Heming vol. i. p. 121, 122.

with reluctance, the English army; and waited a favourable opportunity for embracing the cause of their distressed countrymen. But Wallace, whose authority over his retainers was more fully confirmed by the absence of the great nobles, persevered obstinately in his purpose; and finding himself unable to give battle to the enemy, he marched northwards, with an intention of prolonging the war, and of turning to his advantage the situation of that mountainous and barren country. When Warrenne advanced to Stirling, he found Wallace encamped at Cambuskenneth, on the opposite banks of the Forth; and being continually urged by the impatient Cressingham, who was actuated both by personal and national animosities against the Scots^x, he prepared to attack them in that position, which Wallace, no less prudent than courageous, had chosen for his army^y. In spite of the remonstrances of sir Richard Lundy, a Scotchman of birth and family, who sincerely adhered to the English, he ordered his army to pass a bridge which lay over the Forth; but he was soon convinced, by fatal experience, of the error of his conduct. Wallace, allowing such numbers of the English to pass as he thought proper, attacked them before they were fully formed, put them to rout, pushed part of them into the river, destroyed the rest by the

^x Heming. vol. i. p. 127.

^y On the 11th of September 1297.

edge of the sword, and gained a complete victory over them². Among the slain was Cressingham himself, whose memory was so extremely odious to the Scots, that they flayed his dead body, and made saddles and girths of his skin³. Warrenne, finding the remainder of his army much dismayed by this misfortune, was obliged again to evacuate the kingdom, and retire into England. The castles of Roxborough, and Berwic, ill fortified and feebly defended, fell soon after into the hands of the Scots.

Wallace, universally revered as the deliverer of his country, now received from the hands of his followers the dignity of regent or guardian under the captive Baliol; and finding that the disorders of war, as well as the unfavourable seasons, had produced a famine in Scotland, he urged his army to march into England, to subsist at the expence of the enemy, and to revenge all past injuries, by retaliating on that hostile nation. The Scots, who deemed every thing possible under such a leader, joyfully attended his call. Wallace, breaking into the northern counties during the winter season, laid every place waste with fire and sword; and after extending on all sides, without opposition, the fury of his ravages as far as the bishopric of Durham, he returned, loaded with spoils, and crowned with

² Walsing. p. 73. Heming. vol. i. p. 127, 128, 129. Trivet, p. 307.

³ Heming. vol. i. p. 130.

glory, into his own country^b. The disorders which at that time prevailed in England, from the refractory behaviour of the constable and marshal, made it impossible to collect an army sufficient to resist the enemy, and exposed the nation to this loss and dishonour.

But Edward, who received in Flanders intelligence of these events, and had already concluded a truce with France, now hastened over to England, in certain hopes, by his activity and valour, not only of wiping off this disgrace, but of recovering the important conquest of Scotland, which he always regarded as the chief glory and advantage of his reign. He appeased the murmurs of his people by concessions and promises: he restored to the citizens of London the election of their own magistrates, of which they had been bereaved in the latter part of his father's reign: he ordered strict inquiry to be made concerning the corn and other goods which had been violently seized before his departure, as if he intended to pay the value to the owners^c: and making public professions of confirming and observing the charters, he regained the confidence of the discontented nobles. Having, by all these popular arts, rendered himself entirely master of his people, he collected the whole military force of England, Wales, and Ireland, and marched with an army

^b Heming. vol. i. p. 131, 132, 133.

^c Rymer, vol. ii. p. 813.

of near a hundred thousand combatants to the northern frontiers.

Nothing could have enabled the Scots to resist but for one season so mighty a power, except an entire union among themselves; but as they were deprived of their king, whose personal qualities, even when he was present, appeared so contemptible, and had left among his subjects no principle of attachment to him or his family, factions, jealousies, and animosities, unavoidably arose among the great, and distracted all their councils. The elevation of Wallace, though purchased by so great merit and such eminent services, was the object of envy to the nobility, who repined to see a private gentleman raised above them by his rank, and still more by his glory and reputation. Wallace himself, sensible of their jealousy, and dreading the ruin of his country from those intestine discords, voluntarily resigned his authority, and retained only the command over that body of his followers, who, being accustomed to victory under his standard, refused to follow into the field any other leader. The chief power devolved on the steward of Scotland, and Cummin of Badenock; men of eminent birth, under whom the great chieftains were more willing to serve in defence of their country. The two Scottish commanders, collecting their several forces from every quarter, fixed their station at Falkirk, and purposed there to abide the assault of the English. Wallace was at the head of a

third body, which acted under his command. The Scottish army placed their pikemen along their front: lined the intervals between the three bodies with archers: and dreading the great superiority of the English in cavalry, endeavoured to secure their front by pallisadoes, tied together with ropes^d. In this disposition they expected the approach of the enemy.

BATTLE OF FALKIRK. JULY 22.

THE king, when he arrived in sight of the Scots, was pleased with the prospect of being able, by one decisive stroke, to determine the fortune of the war; and dividing his army also into three bodies, he led them to the attack. The English archers, who began about this time to surpass those of other nations, first chased the Scottish bowmen off the field; then pouring in their arrows among the pikemen, who were cooped up within their intrenchments, threw them into disorder, and rendered the assault of the English pikemen and cavalry more easy and successful. The whole Scottish army was broken, and chased off the field with great slaughter; which the historians, attending more to the exaggerated relations of the populace than to the probability of things, make amount to fifty or sixty thousand

^d Walsing. p. 75. Heming. vol. i. p. 163.

men^c. It is only certain that the Scots never suffered a greater loss in any action, nor one which seemed to threaten more inevitable ruin to their country.

In this general rout of the army, Wallace's military skill and presence of mind enabled him to keep his troops entire; and retiring behind the Carron, he marched leisurely along the banks of that small river, which protected him from the enemy. Young Bruce, who had already given many proofs of his aspiring genius, but who served hitherto in the English army, appeared on the opposite banks; and distinguishing the Scottish chief, as well by his majestic port, as by the intrepid activity of his behaviour, called out to him, and desired a short conference. He here represented to Wallace the fruitless and ruinous enterprise in which he was engaged; and endeavoured to bend his inflexible spirit to submission under superior power and superior fortune: he insisted on the unequal contest between a weak state, deprived of its head and agitated by intestine discord, and a mighty nation, conducted by the ablest and most martial monarch of the age, and possessed of every resource either for protracting the war, or for pushing it with vigour and activity: if the love of his country were his motive for perseverance, his obstinacy tended only to

^c Walsing. p. 76. T. Wykes, p. 127. Heming. vol. i. p. 163, 164, 165. Trivet, p. 313, says only 20,000. M. West. p. 431, says 40,000.

prolong her misery ; if he carried his views to private grandeur and ambition, he might reflect that, even if Edward should withdraw his armies, it appeared from past experience, that so many haughty nobles, proud of the pre-eminence of their families, would never submit to personal merit, whose superiority they were less inclined to regard as an object of admiration, than as a reproach and injury to themselves. To these exhortations Wallace replied, that, if he had hitherto acted alone as the champion of his country, it was solely because no second or competitor, or, what he rather wished, no leader, had yet appeared to place himself in that honourable station : that the blame lay entirely on the nobility, and chiefly on Bruce himself, who, uniting personal merit to dignity of family, had deserted the post which both nature and fortune, by such powerful calls, invited him to assume : that the Scots, possessed of such a head, would, by their unanimity and concord, have surmounted the chief difficulty under which they now laboured, and might hope, notwithstanding their present losses, to oppose successfully all the powers and abilities of Edward : that Heaven itself could not set a more glorious prize before the eyes either of virtue or ambition, than to join, in one object, the acquisition of royalty with the defence of national independence : and that as the interests of his country, more than those of a brave man, could never be sincerely cultivated by a sacrifice of li-

berty, he himself was determined, as far as possible, to prolong not her misery but her freedom, and was desirous that his own life, as well as the existence of the nation, might terminate, when they could no otherwise be preserved than by receiving the chains of a haughty victor. The gallantry of these sentiments, though delivered by an armed enemy, struck the generous mind of Bruce: the flame was conveyed from the breast of one hero to that of another: he repented of his engagements with Edward; and opening his eyes to the honourable path pointed out to him by Wallace, secretly determined to seize the first opportunity of embracing the cause, however desperate, of his oppressed country[†].

The subjection of Scotland, notwithstanding this great victory of Edward, was not yet entirely completed. The English army, after reducing the southern provinces, was obliged to retire for want of provisions; and left the northern counties in the hands of the natives. The Scots, no less enraged at their present defeat, than elated by their past victories, still maintained the contest for liberty; but being fully sensible of the great inferiority of their force, they endeavoured, by applications to foreign courts, to procure to themselves some assistance. The supplications of the Scottish ministers were rejected by Philip; but

[†] This story is told by all the Scotch writers; though it must be owned that Trivet and Hemingford, authors of good credit, both agree that Bruce was not at that time in Edward's army.

were more successful with the court of Rome. Boniface, pleased with an occasion of exerting his authority, wrote a letter to Edward, exhorting him to put a stop to his oppressions in Scotland, and displaying all the proofs, such as they had probably been furnished him by the Scots themselves, for the ancient independence of that kingdom*. Among other arguments, hinted at above, he mentioned the treaty conducted and finished by Edward himself, for the marriage of his son with the heiress of Scotland; a treaty which would have been absurd, had he been superior lord of the kingdom, and had possessed, by the feudal law, the right of disposing of his ward in marriage. He mentioned several other striking facts, which fell within the compass of Edward's own knowledge; particularly that Alexander, when he did homage to the king, openly and expressly declared in his presence, that he swore fealty not for his crown, but for the lands which he held in England: and the pope's letter might have passed for a reasonable one, had he not subjoined his own claim to be liege lord of Scotland; a claim which had not once been heard of, but which, with a singular confidence, he asserted to be full, entire, and derived from the most remote antiquity. The affirmative style, which had been so successful with him and his predecessors in spiritual contests, was never before abused after a more egregious manner in any civil controversy.

* Rymer, vol. ii. p. 844.

The reply, which Edward made to Boniface's letter, contains particulars no less singular and remarkable^b. He there proves the superiority of England by historical facts, deduced from the period of Brutus, the Trojan, who, he said, founded the British monarchy in the age of Eli and Samuel: he supports his position by all the events which passed in the island before the arrival of the Romans: and after laying great stress on the extensive dominions and heroic victories of king Arthur, he vouchsafes at last to descend to the time of Edward the elder, with which, in his speech to the states of Scotland, he had chosen to begin his claim of superiority. He asserts it to be a fact, *notorious and confirmed by the records of antiquity*, that the English monarchs had often conferred the kingdom of Scotland on their own subjects; had dethroned these vassal kings when unfaithful to them; and had substituted others in their stead. He displays with great pomp the full and complete homage which William had done to Henry II., without mentioning the formal abolition of that *extorted* deed by king Richard, and the renunciation of all future claims of the same nature. Yet this paper he begins with a solemn appeal to the Almighty, the searcher of hearts, for his own firm persuasion of the justice of his claim; and no less than a hundred and four barons

^b Rymer, vol. ii. p. 863.

assembled in parliament at Lincoln, concur in maintaining before the pope, under their seals, the validity of these pretensionsⁱ. At the same time, however, they take care to inform Boniface, that, though they had justified their cause before him, they did not acknowledge him for their judge; they had sworn to maintain all its royal prerogatives, and would never permit the king himself, were he willing, to relinquish its independence.

That neglect, almost total, of truth and justice, which sovereign states discover in their transactions with each other, is an evil universal and inveterate; is one great source of the misery to which the human race is continually exposed; and it may be doubted whether, in many instances, it be found in the end to contribute to the interests of those princes themselves, who thus sacrifice their integrity to their politics. As few monarchs have lain under stronger temptations to violate the principles of equity, than Edward in his transactions with Scotland, so never were they violated with less scruple and reserve: yet his advantages were hitherto precarious and uncertain; and the Scots, once roused to arms and enured to war, began to appear a formidable enemy, even to this military and ambitious monarch. They chose John Cummin for their regent; and not content with maintaining their in-

ⁱ Rymer, vol. ii. p. 873. Walsing. p. 85. Heming. vol. i. p. 186. Trivet, p. 330. M. West. p. 443.

dependence in the northern parts, they made incursions into the southern counties, which Edward imagined he had totally subdued. John de Se-grave, whom he had left guardian of Scotland, led an army to oppose them; and lying at Roslin, near Edinburgh, sent out his forces in three divisions, to provide themselves with forage and subsistence from the neighbourhood. One party was suddenly attacked by the regent and sir Simon Fraser; and being unprepared, was immediately routed and pursued with great slaughter. The few that escaped, flying to the second division, gave warning of the approach of the enemy: the soldiers ran to their arms; and were immediately led on to take revenge for the death of their countrymen. The Scots, elated with the advantage already obtained, made a vigorous impression upon them: the English, animated with a thirst of vengeance, maintained a stout resistance: the victory was long undecided between them; but at last declared itself entirely in favour of the former, who broke the English and chased them to the third division, now advancing with a hasty march to support their distressed companions. Many of the Scots had fallen in the two first actions; most of them were wounded; and all of them extremely fatigued by the long continuance of the combat: yet were they so transported with success and military rage, that, having suddenly recovered their order, and arming the followers of their camp with the spoils of the

slaughtered enemy, they drove with fury upon the ranks of the dismayed English. The favourable moment decided the battle; which the Scots, had they met with a steady resistance, were not long able to maintain: the English were chased off the field: three victories were thus gained in one day^k: and the renown of these great exploits, seconded by the favourable dispositions of the people, soon made the regent master of all the fortresses in the south; and it became necessary for Edward to begin anew the conquest of the kingdom.

The king prepared himself for this enterprise with his usual vigour and abilities. He assembled both a great fleet and a great army; and entering the frontiers of Scotland, appeared with a force which the enemy could not think of resisting in the open field; the English navy, which sailed along the coast, secured the army from any danger of famine: Edward's vigilance preserved it from surprises: and by this prudent disposition they marched victorious from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, ravaging the open country, reducing all the castles^l, and receiving the submissions of all the nobility, even those of Cummin the regent. The most obstinate resistance was made by the castle of Brechin, defended by sir Thomas Maule; and the place opened not its gates, till the death of the governor, by dis-

^k Heming, vol. i. p. 197.

^l Ibid. p. 205.

couraging the garrison, obliged them to submit to the fate which had overwhelmed the rest of the kingdom. Wallace, though he attended the English army in their march, found but few opportunities of signalizing that valour which had formerly made him so terrible to his enemies.

Edward, having completed his conquest, which employed him during the space of near two years, now undertook the more difficult work of settling the country, of establishing a new form of government, and of making his acquisition durable to the crown of England. He seems to have carried matters to extremity against the natives : he abrogated all the Scottish laws and customs^m : he endeavoured to substitute the English in their place : he entirely rased or destroyed all the monuments of antiquity : such records or histories as had escaped his former search were now burnt or dispersed : and he hastened, by too precipitate steps, to abolish entirely the Scottish name, and to sink it finally in the English.

Edward, however, still deemed his favourite conquest exposed to some danger, so long as Wallace was alive ; and being prompted both by revenge and policy, he employed every art to discover his retreat, and become master of his person. At last, that hardy warrior, who was determined, amidst the universal slavery of his countrymen, still to maintain his independency, was

^m Ryley, p. 506.

betrayed into Edward's hands by sir John Monteith, his friend, whom he had made acquainted with the place of his concealment. The king, whose natural bravery and magnanimity should have induced him to respect like qualities in an enemy, enraged at some acts of violence committed by Wallace during the fury of war, resolved to overawe the Scots by an example of severity : he ordered Wallace to be carried in chains to London ; to be tried as a rebel and traitor, though he had never made submissions, or sworn fealty to England ; and to be executed on Tower-hill. This was the unworthy fate of a hero, who, through a course of many years, had, with signal conduct, intrepidity, and perseverance, defended, against a public and oppressive enemy, the liberties of his native country.

But the barbarous policy of Edward failed of the purpose to which it was directed. The Scots, already disgusted at the great innovations introduced by the sword of a conqueror into their laws and government, were farther enraged at the injustice and cruelty exercised upon Wallace ; and all the envy which, during his life-time, had attended that gallant chief, being now buried in his grave, he was universally regarded as the champion of Scotland, and the patron of her expiring independency. The people, inflamed with resentment, were every where disposed to rise against the English government ; and it was not long ere a new and more fortunate leader pre-

sented himself, who conducted them to liberty, to victory, and to vengeance.

ROBERT BRUCE.

ROBERT BRUCE, grandson of that Robert who had been one of the competitors for the crown, had succeeded by his grandfather's and father's death, to all their rights; and the demise of John Baliol, together with the captivity of Edward, eldest son of that prince, seemed to open a full career to the genius and ambition of this young nobleman. He saw that the Scots, when the title to their crown had expired in the males of their ancient royal family, had been divided into parties nearly equal between the houses of Bruce and Baliol; and that every incident, which had since happened, had tended to wean them from any attachment to the latter. The slender capacity of John had proved unable to defend them against their enemies: he had meanly resigned his crown into the hands of the conqueror: he had, before his deliverance from captivity, reiterated that resignation in a manner seemingly voluntary; and had in that deed thrown out many reflexions extremely dishonourable to his ancient subjects, whom he publicly called traitors, ruffians, and rebels, and with whom he declared he was determined to maintain no farther correspondenceⁿ:

ⁿ Brady's Hist. vol. ii. App. No. 27.

he had, during the time of his exile, adhered strictly to that resolution; and his son, being a prisoner, seemed ill qualified to revive the rights, now fully abandoned, of his family. Bruce therefore hoped that the Scots, so long exposed from the want of a leader to the oppressions of their enemies, would unanimously fly to his standard, and would seat him on the vacant throne, to which he brought such plausible pretensions. His aspiring spirit, inflamed by the fervour of youth, and buoyed up by his natural courage, saw the glory alone of the enterprise, or regarded the prodigious difficulties which attended it, as the source only of farther glory. The miseries and oppressions which he had beheld his countrymen suffer in their unequal contest; the repeated defeats and misfortunes which they had undergone; proved to him so many incentives to bring them relief, and conduct them to vengeance against the haughty victor. The circumstances which attended Bruce's first declaration are variously related; but we shall rather follow the account given by the Scottish historians; not that their authority is in general anywise comparable to that of the English, but because they may be supposed sometimes better informed concerning facts which so nearly interested their own nation.

Bruce, who had long harboured in his breast the design of freeing his enslaved country, ventured at last to open his mind to John Cummin, a powerful nobleman, with whom he lived in strict

intimacy. He found his friend, as he imagined, fully possessed with the same sentiments ; and he needed to employ no arts of persuasion, to make him embrace the resolution of throwing off, on the first favourable opportunity, the usurped dominion of the English. But on the departure of Bruce, who attended Edward to London, Cummin, who either had all along dissembled with him, or began to reflect more coolly in his absence on the desperate nature of his undertaking, resolved to atone for his crime in assenting to this rebellion, by the merit of revealing the secret to the king of England. Edward did not immediately commit Bruce to custody ; because he intended at the same time to seize his three brothers, who resided in Scotland ; and he contented himself with secretly setting spies upon him, and ordering all his motions to be strictly watched. A nobleman of Edward's court, Bruce's intimate friend, was apprized of his danger ; but not daring, amidst so many jealous eyes, to hold any conversation with him, he fell on an expedient to give him warning, that it was full time he should make his escape. He sent him by his servant a pair of gilt spurs, and a purse of gold, which he pretended to have borrowed from him ; and left it to the sagacity of his friend to discover the meaning of the present. Bruce immediately contrived the means of his escape ; and as the ground was at that time covered with snow, he had the precaution, it is said, to order his horses to be shod with their

shoes inverted, that he might deceive those who should track his path over the open fields or cross roads, through which he purposed to travel. He arrived in a few days at Dumfries in Annandale, the chief seat of his family interest; and he happily found a great number of the Scottish nobility there assembled, and among the rest, John Cummin; his former associate.

The noblemen were astonished at the appearance of Bruce among them; and still more when he discovered to them the object of his journey. He told them that he was come to live or die with them in defence of the liberties of his country, and hoped, with their assistance, to redeem the Scottish name from all the indignities which it had so long suffered from the tyranny of their imperious masters: that the sacrifice of the rights of his family was the first injury which had prepared the way for their ensuing slavery; and by resuming them, which was his firm purpose, he opened to them the joyful prospect of recovering from the fraudulent usurper their ancient and hereditary independence: that all past misfortunes had proceeded from their disunion; and they would soon appear no less formidable than of old to their enemies, if they now deigned to follow into the field their rightful prince, who knew no medium between death and victory: that their mountains, and their valour, which had, during so many ages, protected their liberty from all the efforts of the Roman empire, would still be suf-

ficient, were they worthy of their generous ancestors, to defend them against the utmost violence of the English tyrant: that it was unbecoming men, born to the most ancient independence known in Europe, to submit to the will of any masters; but fatal to receive those who, being irritated by such persevering resistance, and inflamed with the highest animosity, would never deem themselves secure in their usurped dominion; but by exterminating all the ancient nobility, and even all the ancient inhabitants: and that, being reduced to this desperate extremity, it were better for them at once to perish, like brave men, with swords in their hands, than to dread long, and at last undergo, the fate of the unfortunate Wallace, whose merits, in the brave and obstinate defence of his country, were finally rewarded by the hands of an English executioner.

The spirit with which this discourse was delivered, the bold sentiments which it conveyed, the novelty of Bruce's declaration, assisted by the graces of his youth and manly deportment, made deep impression on the minds of his audience, and roused all those principles of indignation and revenge with which they had long been secretly actuated. The Scottish nobles declared their unanimous resolution to use the utmost efforts in delivering their country from bondage, and to second the courage of Bruce, in asserting his and their undoubted rights against their common oppressors. Cummin alone, who had secretly taken

his measures with the king, opposed this general determination; and by representing the great power of England, governed by a prince of such uncommon vigour and abilities, he endeavoured to set before them the certain destruction which they must expect, if they again violated their oaths of fealty, and shook off their allegiance to the victorious Edward°. Bruce, already apprised of his treachery, and foreseeing the certain failure of all his own schemes of ambition and glory from the opposition of so potent a leader, took immediately his resolution; and moved partly by resentment, partly by policy, followed Cummin on the dissolution of the assembly, attacked him in the cloysters of the Grey Friars, through which he passed, and running him through the body, left him for dead. Sir Thomas Kirkpatric, one of Bruce's friends, asking him soon after if the traitor was slain; *I believe so*, replied Bruce. *And is that a matter*, cried Kirkpatric, *to be left to conjecture? I will secure him*. Upon which he drew his dagger, ran to Cummin, and stabbed him to the heart. This deed of Bruce and his associates, which contains circumstances justly condemned by our present manners, was regarded in that age as an effort of manly vigour and just policy. The family of Kirkpatric took for the crest of their arms, which they still wear, a hand with a bloody dagger; and chose for their motto these words,

I will secure him ; the expression employed by their ancestor when he executed that violent action.

THIRD REVOLT OF SCOTLAND.

THE murder of Cummin affixed the seal to the conspiracy of the Scottish nobles : they had now no resource left but to shake off the yoke of England, or to perish in the attempt : the genius of the nation roused itself from its present dejection : and Bruce, flying to different quarters, excited his partisans to arms, attacked with success the dispersed bodies of the English, got possession of many of the castles, and having made his authority be acknowledged in most parts of the kingdom, was solemnly crowned and inaugurated in the abbey of Scone by the bishop of St. Andrews, who had zealously embraced his cause. The English were again chased out of the kingdom, except such as took shelter in the fortresses that still remained in their hands ; and Edward found that the Scots, twice conquered in his reign, and often defeated, must yet be anew subdued. Not discouraged with these unexpected difficulties, he sent Aymer de Valence with a considerable force into Scotland, to check the progress of the malcontents ; and that nobleman falling unexpectedly upon Bruce at Methven in Perthshire, threw his

army into such disorder as ended in a total defeat^p. Bruce fought with the most heroic courage, was thrice dismounted in the action, and as often recovered himself, but was at last obliged to yield to superior fortune, and take shelter, with a few followers, in the western isles. The earl of Athole, sir Simon Fraser, and sir Christopher Seton, who had been taken prisoners, were ordered by Edward to be executed as rebels and traitors^q. Many other acts of rigour were exercised by him; and that prince, vowing revenge against the whole Scottish nation, whom he deemed incorrigible in their aversion to his government, assembled a great army, and was preparing to enter the frontiers, secure of success, and determined to make the defenceless Scots the victims of his severity; when he unexpectedly sickened and died near Carlisle; enjoining with his last breath his son and successor to prosecute the enterprise, and never to desist till he had finally subdued the kingdom of Scotland. He expired in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign, hated by his neighbours, but extremely respected and revered by his own subjects.

^p Walsing. p. 91. Heming. vol. i. p. 222, 223. Trivet, p. 344.

^q Heming. vol. i. p. 223. M. West. p. 456.

CHARACTER OF THE KING.

THE enterprises finished by this prince, and the projects which he formed, and brought near to a conclusion, were more prudent, more regularly conducted, and more advantageous to the solid interests of his kingdom, than those which were undertaken in any reign, either of his ancestors or his successors. He restored authority to the government, disordered by the weakness of his father; he maintained the laws against all the efforts of his turbulent barons; he fully annexed to his crown the principality of Wales; he took many wise and vigorous measures for reducing Scotland to a like condition; and though the equity of this latter enterprise may reasonably be questioned, the circumstances of the two kingdoms promised such certain success, and the advantage was so visible of uniting the whole island under one head, that those who give great indulgence to reasons of state in the measures of princes will not be apt to regard this part of his conduct with much severity. But Edward, however exceptionable his character may appear on the head of justice, is the model of a politic and warlike king: he possessed industry, penetration, courage, vigilance, and enterprise: he was frugal in all his expences that were not necessary; he knew how to open the public treasures on a proper occasion;

he punished criminals with severity ; he was gracious and affable to his servants and courtiers ; and being of a majestic figure, expert in all military exercises, and in the main well-proportioned in his limbs, notwithstanding the great length and the smallness of his legs, he was as well qualified to captivate the populace by his exterior appearance, as to gain the approbation of men of sense by his more solid virtues.

MISCELLANEOUS TRANSACTIONS OF THIS REIGN.

BUT the chief advantage which the people of England reaped, and still continue to reap, from the reign of this great prince, was the correction, extension, amendment, and establishment, of the laws, which Edward maintained in great vigour, and left much improved to posterity : for the acts of a wise legislator commonly remain, while the acquisitions of a conqueror often perish with him. This merit has justly gained to Edward the appellation of the English Justinian. Not only the numerous statutes passed in his reign touch the chief points of jurisprudence, and, according to sir Edward Coke^r, truly deserve the name of establishments, because they were more constant, standing, and durable laws than any made since ;

^r Institute, p. 156.

but the regular order maintained in his administration gave an opportunity to the common law to refine itself, and brought the judges to a certainty in their determinations, and the lawyers to a precision in their pleadings. Sir Matthew Hale has remarked the sudden improvement of English law during this reign; and ventures to assert, that till his own time it had never received any considerable increase[†]. Edward settled the jurisdiction of the several courts; first established the office of justice of peace; abstained from the practice, too common before him, of interrupting justice by mandates from the privy-council[‡]; repressed robberies and disorders[§]; encouraged trade, by giving merchants an easy method of recovering their debts^{||}; and in short, introduced a new face of things by the vigour and wisdom of his administration. As law began now to be well established, the abuse of that blessing began also to be remarked. Instead of their former associations for robbery and violence, men entered into

[†] History of the English Law, p. 158, 163.

[‡] *Articuli super Cart.* cap. 6. Edward enacted a law to this purpose; but it is doubtful whether he ever observed it. We are sure that scarcely any of his successors did. The multitude of these letters of protection were the ground of a complaint by the commons in 3 Edward II. See Ryley, p. 525. This practice was declared illegal by the statute of Northampton, passed in the second of Edward III., but it still continued, like many other abuses. There are instances of it so late as the reign of queen Elizabeth.

^{||} Statute of Winton.

[§] Statute of Acton Burnel.

formal combinations to support each other in law-suits; and it was found requisite to check this iniquity by act of parliament^{*}.

There happened in this reign a considerable alteration in the execution of the laws: the king abolished the office of chief justiciary, which he thought possessed too much power, and was dangerous to the crown^y: he completed the division of the court of exchequer into four distinct courts, which managed each its several branch, without dependence on any one magistrate; and as the lawyers afterwards invented a method, by means of their fictions, of carrying business from one court to another, the several courts became rivals and checks to each other; a circumstance which tended much to improve the practice of the law in England.

But though Edward appeared thus, throughout his whole reign, a friend to law and justice, it cannot be said that he was an enemy to arbitrary power; and in a government more regular and legal than was that of England in his age, such practices as those which may be remarked in his administration, would have given sufficient ground of complaint, and sometimes were, even in his age, the object of general displeasure. The violent plunder and banishment of the Jews; the putting of the whole clergy at once, and by an

^{*} Statute of Conspirators.

^y Spelman Gloss. in verbo *Justiciarius*. Gilbert's Hist. of the Exchequer, p. 8.

arbitrary edict, out of the protection of the law; the seizing of all the wool and leather of the kingdom; the heightening of the impositions on the former valuable commodity; the new and illegal commission of Trailbaston; the taking of all the money and plate of monasteries and churches, even before he had any quarrel with the clergy; the subjecting of every man possessed of twenty pounds a year to military service, though not bound to it by his tenure; his visible reluctance to confirm the Great Charter, as if that concession had no validity from the deeds of his predecessors; the captious clause which he at last annexed to his confirmation; his procuring of the pope's dispensation from the oaths which he had taken to observe the charter; and his levying of talliages at discretion even after the statute, or rather charter, by which he had renounced that prerogative; these are so many demonstrations of his arbitrary disposition, and prove with what exception and reserve we ought to celebrate his love of justice. He took care that his subjects should do justice to each other; but he desired always to have his own hands free in all his transactions, both with them and with his neighbours.

The chief obstacle to the execution of justice in those times was the power of the great barons; and Edward was perfectly qualified, by his character and abilities, for keeping these tyrants in awe, and restraining their illegal practices. This salutary purpose was accordingly the great object

of his attention ; yet was he imprudently led into a measure which tended to increase and confirm their dangerous authority. He passed a statute which, by allowing them to entail their estates, made it impracticable to diminish the property of the great families, and left them every means of increase and acquisition².

Edward observed a contrary policy with regard to the church : he seems to have been the first Christian prince that passed a statute of mortmain ; and prevented by law the clergy from making new acquisitions of lands, which by the ecclesiastical canons they were for ever prohibited from alienating. The opposition between his maxims with regard to the nobility and to the ecclesiastics, leads us to conjecture that it was only by chance he passed the beneficial statute of mortmain, and that his sole object was to maintain the number of knight's fees, and to prevent the superiors from being defrauded of the profits of wardship, marriage, livery, and other emoluments arising from the feudal tenures. This is indeed the reason assigned in the statute itself, and appears to have been his real object in enacting it. The author of the *Annals of Waverly* ascribes this act chiefly to the king's anxiety for maintaining the military force of the kingdom ; but adds, that he was mistaken in his purpose ; for that the Amalekites were overcome more by the

² Brady of Boroughs, p. 25, from the Records.

prayers of Moses than by the sword of the Israelites^a. The statute of mortmain was often evaded afterwards by the invention of *uses*.

Edward was active in restraining the usurpations of the church; and, excepting his ardour for crusades, which adhered to him during his whole life, seems in other respects to have been little infected with superstition, the vice chiefly of weak minds. But the passion for crusades was really in that age the passion for glory. As the pope now felt himself somewhat more restrained in his former practice of pillaging the several churches in Europe, by laying impositions upon them, he permitted the generals of particular orders, who resided at Rome, to levy taxes on the convents subjected to their jurisdiction; and Edward was obliged to enact a law against this new abuse. It was also become a practice of the court of Rome to provide successors to benefices before they became vacant: Edward found it likewise necessary to prevent by law this species of injustice.

The tribute of 1000 marks a year, to which king John, in doing homage to the pope, had subjected the kingdom, had been pretty regularly paid since his time, though the vassalage was constantly denied, and, indeed, for fear of giving offence, had been but little insisted on. The payment was called by a new name of *census*, not

^a P. 234. See also M. West, p. 409.

by that of tribute. King Edward seems to have always paid this money with great reluctance, and he suffered the arrears at one time to run on for six years^b, at another for eleven^c: but as princes in that age stood continually in need of the pope's good offices, for dispensations of marriage and for other concessions, the court of Rome always found means, sooner or later, to catch the money. The levying of first fruits was also a new device begun in this reign, by which his holiness thrust his fingers very frequently into the purses of the faithful; and the king seems to have unwarily given way to it.

In the former reign the taxes had been partly scutages, partly such a proportional part of the moveables as was granted by parliament: in this scutages were entirely dropped; and the assessment on moveables was the chief method of taxation. Edward in his fourth year had a fifteenth granted him; in his fifth year a twelfth; in his eleventh year a thirtieth from the laity, a twentieth from the clergy; in his eighteenth year a fifteenth; in his twenty-second year a tenth from the laity, a sixth from London and other corporate towns, half of their benefices from the clergy; in his twenty-third year an eleventh from the barons and others, a tenth from the clergy, a seventh from the burgesses; in his twenty-fourth year a twelfth from the barons and others,

^b Rymer, vol. ii. p. 77, 107.

^c Ibid. p. 862.

an eighth from the burgesses, from the clergy nothing, because of the pope's inhibition; in his twenty-fifth year an eighth from the laity, a tenth from the clergy of Canterbury, a fifth from those of York; in his twenty-ninth year a fifteenth from the laity, on account of his confirming the perambulations of the forests; the clergy granted nothing; in his thirty-third year, first a thirtieth from the barons and others, and a twentieth from the burgesses, then a fifteenth from all his subjects; in his thirty-fourth year a thirtieth from all his subjects for knighting his eldest son.

These taxes were moderate; but the king had also duties upon exportation and importation granted him from time to time: the heaviest were commonly upon wool. Poundage, or a shilling a pound, was not regularly granted the kings for life till the reign of Henry V.

In 1296 the famous mercantile society, called the *Merchant Adventurers*, had its first origin: it was instituted for the improvement of the woollen manufacture, and the vending of the cloth abroad, particularly at Antwerp^d. For the English at this time scarcely thought of any more distant commerce.

This king granted a charter or declaration of protection and privileges to foreign merchants, and also ascertained the customs or duties which those merchants were in return to pay on mer-

^d Anderson's History of Commerce, vol. i. p. 137.

chandise imported and exported. He promised them security; allowed them a jury on trials, consisting half of natives, half of foreigners; and appointed them a justiciary in London for their protection. But notwithstanding this seeming attention to foreign merchants, Edward did not free them from the cruel hardship of making one answerable for the debts, and even for the crimes, of another that came from the same country^e. We read of such practices among the present barbarous nations. The king also imposed on them a duty of two shillings on each tun of wine imported, over and above the old duty; and forty pence on each sack of wool exported, besides half a mark the former duty^f.

In the year 1303 the Exchequer was robbed, and of no less a sum than 100,000 pounds, as is pretended^g. The abbot and monks of Westminster were indicted for this robbery, but acquitted. It does not appear that the king ever discovered the criminals with certainty; though his indignation fell on the society of Lombard merchants, particularly the Frescobaldi, very opulent Florentines.

The pope having in 1307 collected much money in England, the king enjoined the nuncio not to export it in specie, but in bills of exchange^h.

^e Anderson's Hist. of Commerce, vol. i. p. 146.

^f Rymer, vol. iv. p. 361. It is the charter of Edw. I. which is there confirmed by Edw. III.

^g Rymer, vol. ii. p. 930.

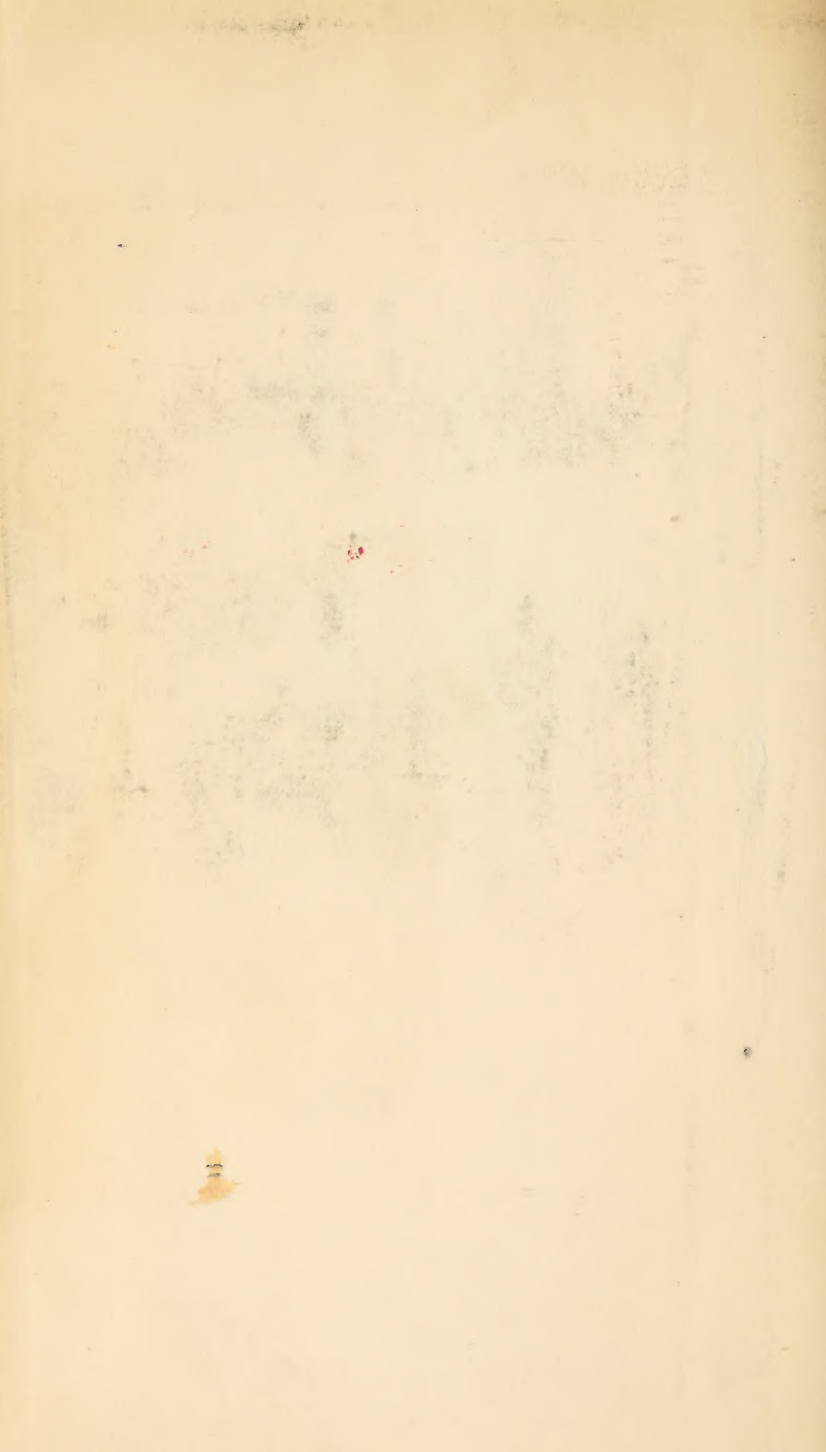
^h Ibid. p. 1092.

A proof that commerce was but ill understood at that time.

Edward had by his first wife, Eleanor of Castile, four sons; but Edward, his heir and successor, was the only one that survived him. She also bore him eleven daughters, most of whom died in their infancy: of the surviving, Joan was married first to the earl of Gloucester, and after his death to Ralph de Monthermer: Margaret espoused John duke of Brabant: Elizabeth espoused first John earl of Holland, and afterwards the earl of Hereford: Mary was a nun at Ambresbury. He had by his second wife Margaret of France, two sons and a daughter; Thomas created earl of Norfolk, and Mareschal of England; and Edmond, who was created earl of Kent by his brother when king. The princess died in her infancy.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

THOMAS DAVISON, Printer,
White-friars.



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